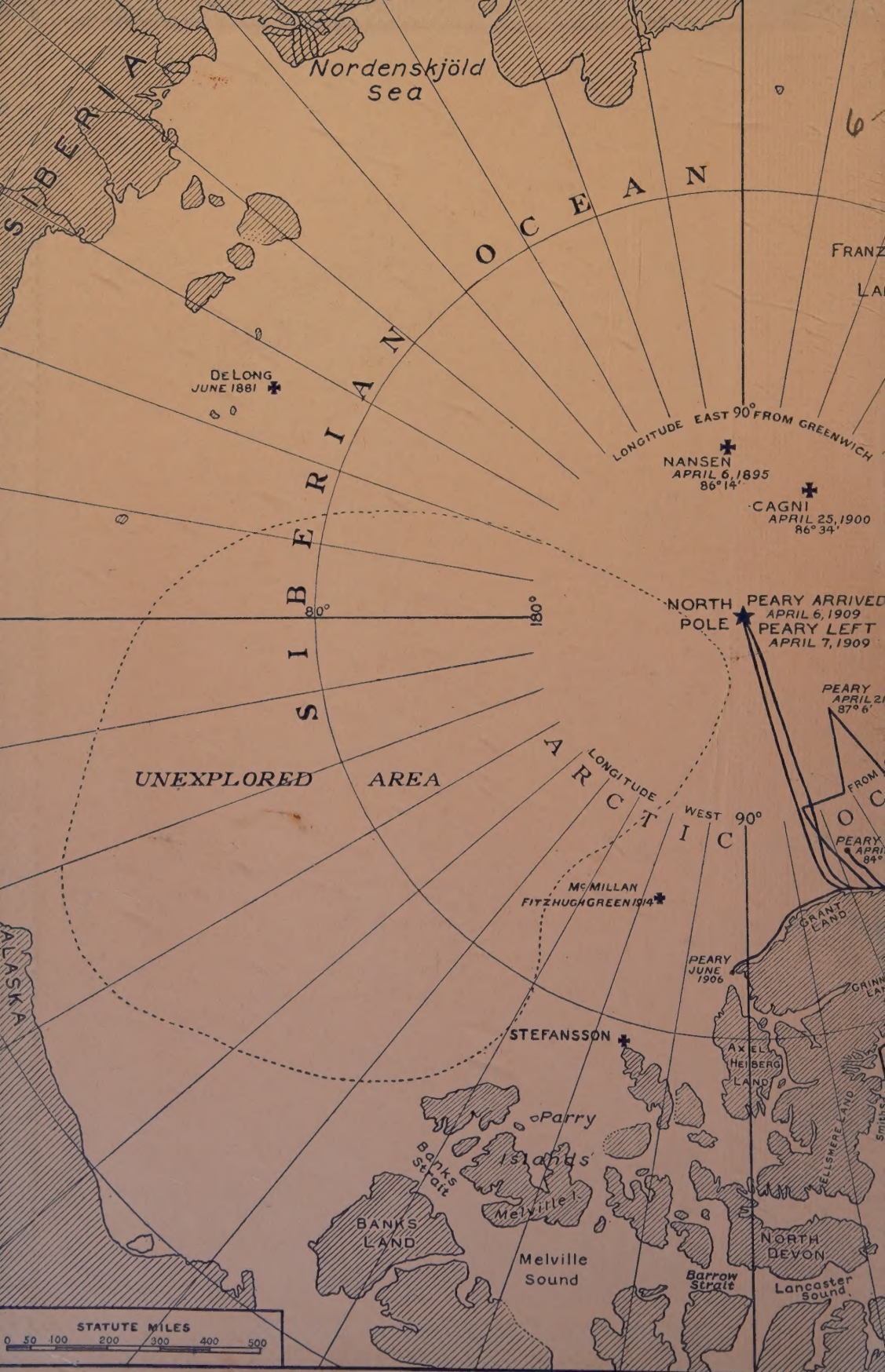
SIBERIA
Nordenskjöld Sea
ARCTIC OCEAN
FRANZ
LA
DE LONG
JUNE 1881
LONGITUDE EAST 90° FROM GREENWICH
NANSEN
APRIL 6, 1895
86° 14'
CAGNI
APRIL 25, 1900
86° 34'
SIBERIAN
80°
180°
NORTH POLE
PEARY ARRIVED
APRIL 6, 1909
PEARY LEFT
APRIL 7, 1909
PEARY
APRIL 2
87° 6'
FROM
O
UNEXPLORED AREA
LONGITUDE WEST 90°
ARCTIC
PEARY
APRI
84°
McMILLAN
FITZHUGH GREEN 1914
GRANT LAND
PEARY
JUNE
1906
GRINN
LAN
ALASKA
STEFANSSON
AXEL
HEIBERG
LAND
Parry
Islands
Banks
Strait
Melville I.
BANKS
LAND
Melville
Sound
NORTH
DEVON
Barrow
Strait
Lancaster
Sound
STATUTE MILES
0 50 100 200 300 400 500

Kara Sea
Nova Zembla
White Sea
RUSSIA
FINLAND
Gulf of Bothnia
BARENTS SEA
SWEDEN
NORWAY
Spitzbergen
PARRY JULY 23, 1827
DISCARD RETIRÉ
80°
70°
ARCTIC CIRCLE
GREENLAND SEA
PEARY MAY 22, 1900
PEARY LAND
PEARY 1898
PEARY 1893-95
PEARY 1892
ICELAND
GREENLAND
PEARY IN "ROOSEVELT" 1905-6 & 1908-9
PEARY 1886
DISKO
GODHAVN
FIN
BAY
Wm J. WILSON, DEL.

Margaret Munro Elder

April 1926

New York City.

PEARY

The Man Who Refused To Fail

By

Fitzhugh Green

WITH 20 ILLUSTRATIONS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK LONDON
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FOREWORD

FOR some time it has been my intention to have the main facts of Admiral Peary's life put into readable form for the benefit of a public which knows him only as the discoverer of the North Pole and has had little opportunity to learn of his many very human and endearing qualities and of the variety and extent of his interests.

The late Herbert L. Bridgman, secretary of the Peary Arctic Club and one of my husband's closest friends, undertook the task, but owing to the press of his numerous other duties, he had scarcely begun when his sudden death occurred on September 24, 1924.

For a while following this sad event, plans for the "Life" were in abeyance, until a few months ago, when the matter was again taken up, this time with Commander Fitzhugh Green, who seems to me peculiarly well fitted for the work; not only because of his friendship and admiration for my husband, but because his own four-year sojourn in the Arctic enables him to understand better than most, the difficulties and annoyances connected with any work of exploration in those regions.

The Eskimos among whom my husband lived and worked for so many years are the same people among whom Commander Green worked, and thus he is particularly well able to judge of the love and respect with which they regarded "Pearyaksoah."

Commander Green has visited places where Admiral Peary lived at various times and has talked with people, old and young, who knew him both before and after his Arctic work; consequently he has been able to gather much information regarding my husband which has never before been published.

Added to the above mentioned qualifications, is Commander Green's particularly happy literary gift which enables him to present his facts in an extremely graphic and readable form, so that I am convinced that in this case the right man and the right task have been brought together.

It is my hope that this work will create a clearer and better understanding of a character that is too little known and appreciated.

JOSEPHINE DIEBITSCH PEARY.

WASHINGTON,
February, 1926.

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PEARY

THE MAN WHO REFUSED TO FAIL

PEARY

CHAPTER I

PEARY THE MAN

ROBERT EDWIN PEARY was born in Cresson, Pa., May 6, 1856, of French and British ancestry. He passed his boyhood in Maine and graduated from Bowdoin College in 1877, a lank red-haired square-jawed youth eager for what life had to give. He soon entered the Coast and Geodetic Survey, from which he joined the United States Navy in 1881. In 1885, though only a lieutenant, he was assistant engineer-in-chief of the Nicaraguan survey. He distinguished himself by inventing a new type of lock gates for the proposed canal. By purest accident he became interested in arctic work and made a reconnaissance of the Greenland ice cap in the summer of 1886. Instantly and deeply he was bitten by the exploring bug. Whereafter for twenty-three years he flung himself in a series of Napoleonic campaigns upon the northern sepulchre of our globe's last great geographical secret. On April 6, 1909, he wrenched this secret free by reaching the North Pole. In recognition of this achievement he received

the thanks of Congress and was promoted to the grade of Rear Admiral and received gold medals from nearly every nation. War in 1917 found him Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Aerial Coast Patrol Commission. His labors therewith culminating a life of overwork and hardship hastened his death by pernicious anemia in 1920 at an age just short of sixty-four.

Such is the bald biography of a man who became famous by choosing a spectacular goal in life and concentrating on that goal until he reached it. Save that his goal was unique there is, in a sense, little to set Peary's struggle for it apart from the struggle of many other successful men.

Then what incentive is there for the historian, the publisher or the reader to inquire beyond these literal items which in this land of opportunity suggest only another trite tale of "making good"?

There is a dual incentive: *First, the fact that the man Peary was to the end nearly as much a mystery to the world as had been his polar goal; and second, the fact that only now in the perspective of years can we see how Peary's life constitutes one of the most dramatic records of human triumph over the diabolic twists of outrageous fortune the world has ever known.*

Like all men Peary had his weaker side. He made mistakes and enemies. He suffered discouragement. He was sometimes startled into over-fierce defense of inconsequential matters. He arrived at unjust conclusions and formed impulsive opinions. He yearned incontinently at times for sympathy and under-

standing. He could be grim and unforgiving. His austerity on occasion was known to all his friends. His tact was often faulty. In short he was outwardly as vulnerable as many another man.

But inwardly he was a sealed book to all but the merest handful of those near and dear. And even that handful often caught but glimpses of the pages of the man's stern soul.

His schoolmates imagined that they knew him. "Hey, Skinny," taunted the class bully one dazzling February noon when the Maine snow still lay feet deep on the level. A sphere of compacted slush punctuated the shout, reaching its mark which was Robert's one and only good hat.

"Better look out," a bystander is said to have cautioned.

Suggested prudence is always a dare to the braggart.

"Shucks, Skinny's his mother's own little boy!" retorted the bully.

Which was true enough in literal fact, though the connotation shot very wide of the silent lad opposite.

The bully advanced. He read timidity into the speechlessness of his victim. And since he outweighed the lean victim of his banter there seemed no physical danger in persisting. He crossed the street. Other boys began to gather: the instinctive wolfishness of men to be in at the kill. Only they, too, were wholly wrong about young Robert.

The bully did all the talking; at least he did it until, to his vast astonishment, he felt swift catlike

fingers at his throat, sensed in a flash that his two feet had been kicked clean from under him, and heard the din of much unsympathetic laughter in his ears as the practised hand of "Skinny" Peary "washed" his face with raw snow crystals.

Another glimpse of the page was more public. During the spring of 1893 rose a grave crisis in the young explorer's life that set tongues wagging, with merciless condemnation. His wife, the very beautiful Josephine Peary, confided in him that the family would soon have an addition. This universally portentous news needs no embellishment to bring profound anxiety into any newly married man's existence. But that was only half the looming climax of events. Years of labor and of planning were now about to culminate in Peary's first really extensive arctic expedition. With the boundless zeal and enthusiasm that characterized everything he did he had finally won support for the great venture on which he had set his heart.

"But he can't go at a time like this!" was the burden of feminine comment.

"He has got to go!" declared the men. Nor were they heartless. What they meant was that the circumstances of Peary's having returned south the previous autumn after his astonishing feat of reaching the north end of Greenland over the ice cap with one companion obligated him to further exploits.

"Impossible! When a man's wife is going to have a baby——"

"But you don't understand! The whole American

public are behind the expedition. Europe is watching. A ship has been chartered. Probably a hundred thousand dollars have been invested already. It is a tremendous thing. Why, it might look like he was glad to escape going into that terrific climate again!"

"*Faugh!* What is money at a time like this!"

So the talk ran. People took sides. The North Pole was not half so hotly debated as the fate of the Peary baby and the perfidy of a man who would let anything so hackneyed as an arctic trip stand in the way of his duty. There seemed no possible solution to the dreadful dilemma. It looked as if it would be a disgrace if Peary gave up the expedition; and it seemed as if it would be an equal disgrace if he didn't.

When the little ship *Falcon* sailed from Portland for Greenland on July 8, 1893, the beautiful Josephine Peary was aboard. Report of the fact was at once discredited in New York. Could a woman survive where so many brave men had suffered and died but a few years before? It seemed incredible. But she did.

Peary's record was brief but touching: "On September 12th, an interesting event occurred at Anniversary Lodge in the arrival of a little nine-pound stranger, Marie Ahnighito Peary. This little blue-eyed snowflake, born at the close of the arctic summer day, deep in the heart of the White North far beyond the farthest limits of civilized people or habitations, saw the cold grey light of the arctic autumn once only before the great night settled upon us."

Then there was that time in the spring of 1906 after the world's record of 87° 6′ N. had been made: only 204 miles from the Pole itself; a heartbreaking attempt, thwarted by open water. Peary and his little party of Eskimos retreated southward over the Polar sea ice starving. Now the great northern pack is in a constant state of motion. Sledges on it out of sight of land can never be quite sure which way they are drifting. By his astronomical observations the white man knew the ice had drifted eastward. But the natives had watched the land slide eastward when they first left many weeks earlier. Hence their idea was that the ship lay east instead of west.

Old Panikpah told the writer the story. He said:

"We were very weak when we reached the shore. We had been on short rations for more than twenty sleeps. Peary spoke of marching towards the late sun to reach the ship. We were surprised.

"'The ship lies yonder,' Pewahto said, and pointed where the sun comes up. We thought Peary would be very angry when we all agreed with Pewahto. Our leader was a very stern man and we had never contradicted him before. But now we were not far from death.

"Peary told us to sit down and talk about it. He made sure we all had no doubt that the ship was east. Then he told us that the ship was west. But still we did not believe him.

"Then Peary stood up among us and said: 'You remember that I have a very fine wife. And you have seen my daughter who is white as the ivory

gull. I have also a son whose heart is as my own beating in another breast. I want to go back to my wife and my daughter and my son. And if I were not sure the way I choose, which is to the west, were right I should go as you direct.'

"At this we fell silent. Presently Ahngmalokto, who was a great Medicine Man, said: 'The White Man speaks the truth. For none could speak as he does and utter other than what is so.' Then we all rose and followed Peary and reached the ship in nine sleeps, going just opposite from what we Innuit had wished."

They thought he would be angry at their contradicting him: instead, to their surprise, Peary stood there swaying with hunger faintness and quietly appealed to their most elemental emotion. Force or bluster would have failed miserably. The Eskimos would only have gone east to their death and Peary west and probably to his.

His life was full of these unexpected touches. Often he seemed unconscious of the crisis at hand. When emergency arose he was more the quiet imperturbable observer with scientific leanings than he was the harsh character so many have made him out to be. For instance, on that memorable crossing of the ice cap when he took his life in his hands by going much further than his supplies warranted he faced the pain of coming back with all the savage defiance mere man could exhibit. Yet when it came to actual paring down of equipment for the long trek over the white desert he counted out nine cartridges for the single rifle. "Why nine?" asked Hugh

Lee. For reply Peary pointed to the team of gaunt dogs. There were nine dogs. All would probably drop in their traces. The Eskimo method was to strangle the animal before cutting him up for food. Peary—"so exhausted by the incessant labor that our minds almost refused to function"—chose nine cartridges.

From a dramatic viewpoint the other angle of Peary's life is even more enthralling. Superstitious sailors who went north with him said over and over again that he was cursed. It certainly looked so. Yet studied in retrospect his story suggests divine inception far more than it does the muddling of capricious fate. For it is the victory of the sore-tried soul that in its tonic inspiration to others bespeaks a cunning Providence.

In a sense Peary refused to fail. Circumstances pushed him back into obscurity by the death of his father and the penury of his mother. When he tried through competitive examination to enter the Navy it so happened that there had been unusually good advertising of appointments for that year. As a result the quota of college graduates was high, many of the leading technical schools of America being represented. After being successful and having been detailed to his first important duty the young officer found himself shackled to an incompetent civilian engineer whose professional standing brooked no interference. Just as years before, when he was red-headed "Skinny," Peary stood aloof and silent. That he was nettled his mien did not reveal. But

when the moment for action came he manœuvered the grandiloquent civilian out of the way and finished the job himself.

It was typical of the scurvy tricks Fate seemed at the time to play on the young man that he should be inspired to be an arctic explorer just when interest in the Far North was at its lowest ebb. Franklin had vanished into the icy darkness with two splendid ships of the British Royal Navy only about thirty years before. Search expeditions in subsequent years had finally proved that both vessels had been crushed in the ice and their combined crews of nearly 150 men had perished of cold and hunger, not a single soul surviving. Then Kane did his great work for the American Navy but brought back tales of harrowing hardship and death. De Long also of the Navy tried the Bering Sea route and lost both his ship and most of his men, including his own life. Greely aroused the whole country when he and his party lay slowly dying at Cape Sabine, where one by one the party dwindled until only seven out of twenty-five returned with the rescue squadron alive.

"Explore the north again!" exclaimed one jeering editorial when Peary's early schemes were whispered about. "Lock the young man up before he damages himself or anyone else!"

Said another: "It savors of the criminal that there should be suggested another plan to take ships and men to the arctic regions. From the viewpoint of wasted public funds alone such an idea should be

nipped in the bud before a lot of stupid sheep are led to their death by a feverish fanatic."

It is not our province to debate the justice of such an attitude, but one may well imagine the fervor of the young naval officer who overwhelmed not only the strongest sort of bias against so much as the mention of ice and snow, but by his eloquence and logic won the support of scientific men. In 1891 he managed to get leave from the Navy Department. And he secured a ship. He persuaded good men to go with him. He sailed with fair equipment. He forced his way successfully through the feared ice of Melville Bay. He anchored off the spot on the Greenland coast from which he knew he could carry out his plan. His elation was almost uncontrollable. And since he was very young and very determined, he could scarcely contain himself for having thus assured final success to the expedition.

But he had not counted on what the sailors called his "curse." At the very moment of his jubilation the ship's heavy steel tiller slashed sideways and crushed the two bones in his right leg.

The advice he heard when the leg was set was mixed. Some said: "If you try to travel with that leg you may be a cripple all your life. You haven't landed your stuff. Why not go home and try again next year?"

But Peary was deaf to such casuistry. He had his leg harnessed to a board. He stayed and a few months later with Eivind Astrup walked over 1300 miles across the inland ice of Greenland.

How Fate may have grinned when in 1893 the explorer, now a national hero, went north secretly hoping to reach the North Pole. This time he planned to take eight men across the ice cap with him. Two were to continue south along the unexplored east coast of Greenland. Two were to continue northward across the new found land beyond the glaciers. There was plenty of pemmican and fuel. Many dogs were purchased. Early in the fall food was carried up on the ice. With the experience of the previous expedition behind him Peary could well be sanguine for the spring journey.

With the music of popular applause still echoing faintly in his ears the leader and his bold companions set forth soon after the coming of the sun in the spring of 1894. It was cold, but that was to be expected. The distant goal seemed almost in sight. But Peary's destined ill-luck was ready soon after the sledgers had reached the ice-cap. The wind began to blow. It blew for 60 days, on many of which its strength was that of a howling blizzard. Briefly the storm devoured the energies of the little party. There was no alternative but retreat. When the ship came three months later all but two of the men politely signified their desire to return home.

Then came the episode of the lost food. Believing it safe Peary had left practically his entire supply of food and fuel on the ice-cap. He marked it well. At intervals during the following months he had it visited and the marks renewed. In the spring of 1895 he again set forth to make his greatest record

northward. With the great cache of food on the ice-cap he and his two men might even reach the pole.

When he reached the spot where the cache had been it had disappeared. Not a vestige of the marks remained after the burying snowfalls of the long black arctic night.

And so it went throughout his life. Each time he seemed to have reached a point whence success was just beyond his finger-tips Peary inevitably found himself confronted by some devilish obstacle. That his work was largely laid amid scenes of arctic savagery contributed only to a limited degree to the inherent tragedy of each crisis that he met. It was his combination of strength of purpose with strategic cunning that carried him through each time and makes the study of his winning to the mark so fascinating.

Even at the climax of his life, the moment when triumph and defeat struck him almost simultaneously with an impact that echoed throughout the world, he did not falter long. He was stunned, yes. And very angry with the righteous wrath of a sure man deeply wronged. But the revelation herein to follow of what lay behind it all throws light on the secret places of the heart of a man *who refused to fail.*

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD AND BEYOND

ONE of the tonic themes of science is that of human heritage. Diet reddens our blood, but the quality of that blood's corpuscles is handed down from the generations who have gone before. So when one of the human swarm on this crowded globe stands head and shoulders above the multitude it is very interesting to contemplate whence came his rich blood's virtues.

With Peary the strain is clear that led to his unique life. On his father's side, some three generations back, we find in the south of France old Stephen Pierre, from which evolved the name of Peary. Pierre was a man of the sea. No doubt his ancestry had run down the Spanish Main and rounded the Horn to the storied islands of the South Pacific. They must have sailed well, too; for by the days of John Paul Jones when our story opens they were as a family too prosperous for else than directing their clippers from the safety of the green shores of a southern province. Then came France's agony. Pierre's son could see no light ahead. So he emigrated to the New World and helped lay the foundations of our nation.

On the mother's side the lead is clearly Anglo-Saxon: a long line of early pioneers straight from the solid blundering empire of Britain. These pioneers were land owners and builders of great raftered barns. They were among that nameless patient army of early Americans who gathered a myriad rocky fragments left by prehistoric glaciers and piled them in tidy walls throughout New England. They were thrifty; and they feared God with a deep conviction of His mercies. They were a little grim in their outlook on life. They were great eaters but moderate drinkers. Dissipation was almost legendary among them.

Both the half-French Pearys and the wholly British Wileys (the mother's side) were of a strong and virile stock. There were always many children: fine hearty boys and girls who belied the set features of their elders. There was old James Peary, the great-grandfather, who had a large family, and could swing an axe with the best of them on the birth of his tenth grandchild. It is a joy to list the names of these Peary children: James, Charles, George, Amanda, Henry and Ella; such a sterling set of human handles! We are interested in the fact that of these the eldest, James, had five sons and a daughter: George, James, Charles, Eben, Henry and Ella. Charles was the father of the Discoverer of the Pole.

It is a mixed-up story to tell; one of those family bible affairs where a dictionary of names would be just about as helpful as our mountain of documents in straightening out the astonishing entanglement of relationships. Suffice it to say that our hero's

grandmother, Almira Peary, was a sister to Eben Nutter, who in the course of sleigh and quilting parties lost his heart to the elder Wiley girl, a sister in turn of the sweet-natured Mary Wiley, our Robert's mother. (Can't you see the old folks teaching it all to the impatient beaux and flappers of the fifties who cared not a darning needle who was who's aunt by marriage or why?)

They were all living up in or about Stowe, Maine, at that time, in the early fifties. Maine was not New York; yet Maine's mariners sailed as far. So it was that tales of the gold rush, of Sir John Franklin's and Elisha Kent Kane's great arctic voyages, of Indian warfare, and all the other thrilling news of the day came swiftly into Stowe. The air was surcharged with romance and adventure. Men moved to "the next place" as much because they could not stay still as for any motive of gain.

Eben Nutter, the grandmother's brother, had a successful shook[1] business. He took pride in the fact that one of his most promising assistants was young Charles Peary, his nephew. So when Eben wedded the town belle it is just to suppose that he highly, and with appropriate secrecy, commended Charles Peary to the graces of the flashing-eyed, very much younger sister-in-law, then in her teens.

Eben Nutter moved just as all men seemed to be moving. His choice for a new home and place of business was the little town of Cresson near the summit of the Pennsylvania Appalachians. Here the

[1] Manufacture of barrel heads and staves.

land was high and the timber sound. Eben branched out. He opened two offices and shops, one at nearby Galetzin and the other at Chess Springs where James, a brother of Charles (the father of our man), shared the profits with him. Besides James and Charles, the shrewd old Eben took other young men with him. Not a few were relations or connections traceable to the many diverse branches of the family, the good old families of Kilgores and Bryants.

It may seem stretching a point of biographical license thus to prowl among these admirable but quite obscure forerunners of the Peary family. But not so. Contemplate for a moment the atmosphere in which they lived: the innate virility of person; the close corporation of family business interests; the enduring tribal bonds; the high moral standard; the fine pervasive patriotism; the sanguine ambition; the tenacity of purpose; the defiance of environment; the Spartan domesticity; the singleness of purpose; and the unswerving progress toward an economic and a social goal that illuminated the purposeful progress more than it ever did the goal. Then regard this atmosphere as an ethical entity, a microcosm, perched up there amid the clean summits of the mountains upon which shone nightly the glinting stars until a fresh sun strode over the curving horizon and bathed the green and virgin land in the glory of a new day.

It is as though that group of good people were laid like an egg of Destiny in the womb of a clean nature for the single purpose of bringing forth a finer speci-

men of the race than the commonplace mechanics of gestation could achieve.

Robert Peary at the age of three was a chubby blue-eyed baby with tight golden curls. The first glimpse we have of the tot is one crisp New Year's morning with the ground outside the window white from last night's snowfall. He is struggling to attain the eminence of the parlor sofa. Twice he falls. But he does not cry. He is a persistent little fellow. He tries again. And still again. There is something prophetic in the clutching straining efforts of that man-cub to mount the object of his aspiration. But oh, what a difference from the future, fifty years beyond the moment: the plump baby cheeks drawn and gaunt, the dancing blue eyes sunken and haunted, the rose-bud mouth a pencilled line of grimness, the dimpled toes marked only by gnarled scars showing where the cruel North had gnawed them off.

Ugh! It is an ugly thing man's will can make of his docile flesh.

Behind the baby, their faces bright with proud smiles, stand Charles Peary and Mary Wiley. It is the same Charles whom crafty old Eben Nutter had commended to his fetching young sister-in-law, thereby mending both his—Eben's—business and family fortunes. For now Charles was there in Cresson helping build the growing shook production as well as starting another branch of the tribe that in the chubby baby, Robert, fully confirmed old Eben's predilections for the father.

Charles Peary and Mary Wiley Peary, both just

turned thirty; there in the flush of their youth; all life ahead; success and happiness; and their loving hearts bound up in this blue-eyed ray of sunshine that struggled so hard to climb to the brow of the ancient red-plush sofa.

But the will of God is inscrutable. Bland and happy as was this little picture of bliss on that snowy sunlit New Year's morning of 1859, tragedy lurked just around the corner. In a month Charles Peary lay dead of double pneumonia.

"Stay with us," pleaded Eben to Mary Peary, wondering in his stout old heart why the girl didn't cry. She couldn't cry. Her grief was too deep for that. "It is His will. And when it is over you and the little one can live with us here where you can always find warm arms when the days are too dark."

But neither Eben nor the others understood. They didn't understand why Mary did not cry. They didn't understand why she went right ahead quietly packing her few belongings. And when she with her dead and her tiny blue-eyed living were gone they still didn't understand.

Today under the elms of the Brown Hill cemetery in South Portland, Me., stands a double stone of white marble which bears two names and dates: "Charles N. Peary, 1828–1859; Mary Wiley, his wife, 1827–1900." Forty years Mary waited; but in the end there under the whispering elms she lies beside her Charles.

It is more than family history, all this. It is an incredibly clear-cut series of events that points

Peary, Age 4.

irrefutably toward a sentient scheming Ruler of the Universe. There was the Gallic heritage of fervor and inspired endeavor. There was the Anglo-Saxon strain of tenacity and fine undying courage. There was that group of splendid early American citizens led by an invisible hand to the mountain-tops. Whereupon, the stage all properly set, occurred the birth of Robert Peary, destined to do a great thing.

Then opens another chapter. Mary Peary brought the body of Charles to Portland for burial and then went to live not far away in the little house at Cape Elizabeth which Charles had bought with his savings. It is not a strange thing for a boy to live alone with his mother. Yet under the circumstances, Robert Peary's living alone with his mother probably did more to make him a great explorer than any other single external factor in his life. She it was who, recalling the lover of her other days, moulded the moral character of the son. Gently but firmly she led him into the right books and hobbies. She watched his food and his youthful friends with equal interest. She taught him of his family, holding them up as traditional examples of splendid men. She told him of the plans his father had had for the future, how he was going to be the most successful manufacturer in the state. She spoke to him of plans beyond that: how they were going to travel and see the distant corners of the earth. Unconsciously she let him perceive, as he grew in years, the golden inspiration of the love of a good woman. And she did one thing more. Let Robert say it in his own words:

"She made me *feel* there was a God. Other boys there were who believed it. I *felt* it."

Yet for all their love and intimacy through the days of their association ran a thread of melancholy. Not a dismal gloom, but rather like the swift shadow that marches across the field when a vagrant cloud obscures the sun. Memory is sometimes such a shadow. And as Mary watched her blue-eyed golden-haired baby lengthen to a lumbersome boy, then to the sapling-like imitation of a man, she not infrequently fell into reveries of her bridal year among the mountain-tops. She was still young here in Portland alone with her son. She was still strong. There were no mountain-tops in the neighborhood to climb. But there were highlands back of the town and in places overlooking the sea. So it was quite natural again that she walked in the bracing air to these highlands. When she paused on their summits she was silent, not looking out across the lovely Maine seaboard, but across the years towards the ultimate reunion with her mate.

In the early days Robert did not understand these silences. Nor did he consciously feel the passing shadow of his mother's melancholy; though the effect of both was but another stroke of the invisible hand now fashioning his character.

So it is we find the lad and then the man a little different from his fellows. He was less talkative. He seemed to think more. Both habits were no doubt cultivated from the gentle mellowing sorrow of his mother; for judging from his many cousins, his

should have been a gayer, more irresponsible, personality.

Young Robert was not a dreamer. If he reacted to the occasional sombre mood of the mother he so loved, his mental processes were not vacuous in the reaction. As his bones and tendons lengthened he began tramping and climbing where the mother could not readily follow. But he did not leave her out. He brought back trophies: puerile bits at first, full of childish pathos. Whereat she taught him the rudiments of woodcraft and of bird lore of which her Charles had been so fond.

We see him pictured by a schoolmate:

"They were a very devoted mother and son. Yet he seemed to be much by himself, going on long tramps, hunting and fishing. His rooms were filled with the stuffed skins of birds and animals for he mounted the specimens he obtained. He was always strong and hardy, laughing at the cold we felt so much."

Writes another:

"Robert was very reticent as a rule. Much of his time he spent over the hills and fields, catching butterflies or in the woods after birds and eggs and nests. His was not the idea of destruction, but to form a collection."

From the land he roamed asea. His woodcraft was amended and supplemented by a skillful seaman-

ship which he acquired from the local seafarers among whom he formed many lasting friendships. In the open he grew in strength and daring. Presently we see him cruising the island-studded breadth of Casco Bay, exploring with the zest of young boyhood the upper reaches of this picturesque body of water.

But the mother was not forgotten. Always back to her he came, bringing his yarns and his trophies. Her warm responsiveness urged him on. When she approved of his vacation camping on Haskell's Island she fulfilled the climax of his ambitions. Home again he told her of his lobster pots, of his camp fires and his thrills, that only she would understand.

Again with magic clarity evolved the destiny of the man. He set his heart on one of the islands he so often passed: symmetrical, heavily wooded Eagle Island. Said he: "*Some day that island shall be mine.*" And it was! Moreover the possession of it, for sundry reasons later explained, fitted into his ultimate struggle and success just as fitted the verve of Stephen Pierre, the grit of Eben Nutter, the tragedy of Charles Peary, and the—to her family—inexplicable grief of Mary Wiley Peary.

In March, 1869, Robert entered the Portland High School. At this point we see his character traits becoming palpable items in his make-up. Like a portrait under the artist's brush he begins to emerge from sketchy outlines suggested by heredity.

His mind began to show. He had always been a normal boy. But, as with other normal boys, too

many impacts with the wonder of living kept back the tide of his growing powers of thought and reason. He excelled in mathematics. His powers of metrical composition were strong, though he had no patience for the poet's lassitude. Of a large graduating class he stood second in scholastic work. Yet he was not a book-worm. Rather did he win by a sense of detail coupled with strong analytical ability. He had an aptitude for natural sciences, yet already the cramping laboratory made him yearn for a wider physical horizon.

Perhaps it was his relations with the other boys that are, from this distance, most illuminating. One of them wrote,

"I always looked up to him and trusted him as I would an older brother. There was an originality and an individuality about everything he did that was fascinating to me. One time he had to speak an original composition and we listened in awe and admiration to an original poem. I do not know that he ever wrote another poem, but to my wondering ears he struck an heroic note in that metric oration that I never have forgot."

As it was then so it remained to the end; and this was one of the many tragedies of the man's life: he could inspire men; he could fascinate them; he could reveal to them his superb and indomitable will. But Peary, the boy or the man, was never a great leader, save to the zealot, in that he could never capture the imagination of the mass. He was a

tower of strength in himself. But only a tower. The human structure that should have reared about him never existed. Had it existed, paradoxical as it may seem, he would have failed in his great purpose.

Thus again do we see Providence almost savagely cruel in its expedients, yet unerring in its aim.

CHAPTER III

THE YOUNG ENGINEER

"WHEN the class of Bowdoin 1877 had its 35th reunion in 1912, Peary invited all present to spend a day with him at Eagle Island. Those who went had a delightful time. An elaborate dinner was served and when we entered the dining room Peary said: 'You can find your own places at the table.' To our surprise at each place was a photograph of the man taken at graduation. This made a great impression on me. Here was a man whose work had taken him all over the world. Yet when his classmates visited him, he had their pictures, which had been taken 35 years before, just where he could lay his hands on them. . . . And yet they say he was cold!"

So wrote one of the classmates. And they sat down, those old codgers, for a gay hour over a common board for the first time in many years. They were interesting in that not a failure sat among the party. And they were full of the old spirit of banter. But a certain dominant note of enthusiasm was missing. Theirs was the bland amiability of men who had found their various niches in life and had filled them these many years.

How much more absorbing is the picture of those same men nearly two score years before, of one of them in particular—Peary.

Turn back to the spring of 1873 just after the boy's seventeenth birthday. He made application for entry to Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine, 26 miles above Portland. In the fall he entered. He was six feet tall already, sinewy, and rapidly losing the awkwardness of his boyhood years. His carriage was erect. He had that eager look of the young man: that grand self-control which hides the doubts and fears beneath. Contemporaries speak of his jaw being squared then as a sort of prophetic beacon pointing towards his future battles. But they erred. Young Peary's square jaw was only that bold bluff of the seventeen-year-old wondering *what next;* the lugubrious, even while splendid, courage of the college boy who is just beginning to feel the overwhelming complexity of life and secretly doubts his poor ability ever to cope with it.

Mary Wiley Peary went along to Brunswick. Destiny was still using the mother as a foil. Except for her, Robert would have lived in the Dormitories, where owing to his many Portland acquaintances he would have been successful just as he no doubt would have been successful up there in Cresson had his father lived. But Destiny knew better. So Peary lived out in a little boarding house with his mother, getting more of her philosophy, more of her single-purposed high ideals, more of her subconscious suggestivity towards the open and the high places.

It could not have well been otherwise that Peary should take civil engineering and the natural sciences. Both fitted in with his growing propensities for love and study of the land. Fortunately it was in courses along these lines that Bowdoin excelled. Possibly Stephen Pierre's imagination came out in Peary's aptitude for figures. Certainly such rare talent as he showed had to come from some endowment.

But even heredity and environment sometimes quail before the onslaughts of a determined human being. Such an one was the notorious Dudley A. Sargent, the greatest physical instructor that ever lived, according to the judgment of many. Few who knew him ever forgot his dominant personality, his ruddy cheeks under a shock of white hair, his prominent nose through which he loudly snorted when aroused, his stocky figure.

"Send me that Peary lad," said Sargent.

"But he's down in town," demurred a classmate.

"So much the better, for it makes him walk," retorted the head of the Physical Department.

Peary did not disappoint the older man. His long tramps and summer camping had done their groundwork well. Sargent had an athlete on his hands in Peary's freshman year. Crew work seemed to fit him best; though he distinguished himself in running and jumping, and even throwing the 16-pound hammer. Training discipline appealed to him unexpectedly. But he was not a blind slave to law that ran athwart his sense of justice. At the very height of his athletic prowess we find him rebelling

against the military drill which had survived from Civil War days just a decade before. He was suspended; and so was Mary Wiley's judgment. The mother had begun to find the man in the son. She did right. The rules were changed and Robert went back to his books and crossbars.

By the third year Peary's academic standing became a matter of note among his professors. Only one other youth excelled in the draughting work that had so fully captured Peary's fancy. Peary vowed he would beat the fellow. In the end he did. Whereupon his rival elicited from their admiring professor: "You would be a good one to work in heaven, young man, where they want work well done, all right; but have all eternity to do it in."

Peary had thus learned a great lesson which came home many tragic times in later years: to do the task well wasn't enough; it had to be done within the alloted period to count. His greatest task he squeezed into life almost by the skin of his teeth.

Again heredity and an adoring mother succumbed to man's influence. For with his success in athletics came to Peary his share in popularity. It wasn't the shoulder-carrying kind. Alas, he never knew that kind at college or any other place. It was denied him for the same reason that he was not a great leader: the cooling current of his innate reticence and pride forbade that momentary letting down the bars at just the proper moments which nicks prestige but meshes heartstrings.

He graduated in 1877. He stood up there on the

commencement platform, an inch taller than ever; more bold; more self-contained; square-jawed; even a silky red moustache curving over his already-uncompromising mouth. He was a clean-looking young man; and his soul was as clean as his appearance. Yet for all his impressive presence the discerning eye could read the pathetic, hopeless, nay desperate, optimism of youth that has not yet found its niche in life.

Peary never lacked initiative. He was now an accredited engineer. Though his devotion to his mother had not dimmed he felt now more powerfully than ever modern man's great urge to go ahead and do something, though the something may seem a rainbow's end in the mists ahead.

He went up to Fryeburg on the upper Saco River. He rented office space. He made contacts in the neighborhood; wrote friends; solicited business as a country surveyor. He wrote: "I was more lonely at this time of my life than in any other days I ever lived through. Perhaps it was because I saw less of mother."

Yet Peary's gloom was not loneliness. It was that dismal vale of doubt through which every beginner goes. "Is it always to be like this?" we can see him asking himself perched atop some nearby hilltop. "Should I go? Or should I stay? Why not try another place?" It is the same for every man. Even the words are the same. And it is life's most oppressive period for the sincerely ambitious.

Yet he made his mark at North Fryeburg, as he

did at every other place in which he worked. The region was hilly, half-wild, largely forested and imperfectly defined. All this gave the young surveyor an admirable opportunity to combine theory with practice. Obliterated old lines were restored; new ones run, and fixed points established. Two or three ancient survey monuments rediscovered and restored by Peary, and a permanent true meridian line, are still pointed to with pride by the townspeople.

Even Peary's methods were already prophetically characteristic. Wrote a local resident:

"The railroad bridge over the river was considered unsafe by Professor Vose of Bowdoin. He kept at the Company until they strengthened it; but even then he was not satisfied and asked Peary to examine it and report. Unlike most boys, who would have gone down for an hour or two before reporting, Peary spent three days scrutinizing the bridge and made a fully annotated exposition of his findings. Some time later the bridge collapsed and it was found that the weak points were exactly those pointed out by Peary."

Thus early in life did he acquire the habit of conscientious accuracy.

Peary's first opportunity came when he had been in North Fryeburg about a year. He was offered a position as a scientific instructor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston. His next opportunity was so anemic in appearance that one is surprised that he even gave it a thought, unless one grants a "guiding hand" in the young man's affairs.

It was in the shape of a circular letter that had fallen into the hands of one of his college professors. This letter stated that four new draftsmen were needed in the Coast and Geodetic Survey in Washington. In every postoffice and college of the United States this letter had been posted. Perhaps two million young men had access to it, of whom at least a million were nearer Washington than Peary. The salary was to be $10 per week, a figure untempting even to the penury of the young surveyor up in Fryeburg. However, Peary sent a specimen of his work which in 1879 brought him an appointment in the Coast and Geodetic Survey; a chance in about two million, yet once more a chance that by its consummation made possible the Peary the world remembers.

But he was still a perplexed young man searching for his niche in life. He now lived in Washington and worked in a drafting room, and found his industry to the taste of his employers. But what did the future hold? What should he do and where should he go to better himself? Within him still surged an undirected ambition. To his mother he wrote: "I shall not be satisfied that I have done my best until my name is known from one end of the world to the other."

He passed by several opportunities in Washington for no other reason than that they didn't suit. Why not? Was there a sixth sense in the man, a sort of instinctive feeling that success would come in the open? It certainly looked so. For he waited another two years and then by nearly as thin a chance

as brought him to Washington he entered the United States Navy. Another man in the office pointed out a notice in the paper advertising competitive examination for appointment to the Corps of Civil Engineers. "*I had always had a feeling* for the Navy," wrote Peary in explaining his change.

Peary's approach to the examination was characteristic. Having made up his mind to try it, he took ten days leave and rented a small room in another part of the city so as not to disturb his lodgemate. There he buried himself with his books and instruments for a week of intensive preparation. Far into the night he worked. He went out only to eat. He knew, as in the previous case, that the opportunity had been widely advertised. On examination morning he presented himself with over 200 other candidates. He was one of a handful that survived the searching test. "Peary was surprised that he got the appointment which was secured by only three others," records one of his associates.

"This was especially so because he frankly confessed to his examiners that there were many questions he could not answer. But they retorted that they were satisfied from his showing he was a man who if he did not know a thing would keep at it until he did, and so was the kind of man the Navy needed."

It is curious that after the grind was over interminable red tape led Peary to believe that he had failed. Many weeks later a fellow worker startled him by saying: "Congratulations! I see the Presi-

dent has sent your name to the Senate for confirmation as an engineer in our Navy."

The well-known Civil Engineer Menocal had been on the examining board. He lost no time in securing the promising young Peary for the Washington Navy Yard. This was convenient for our man, because it meant no moving. But we must not forget that Peary was still asearch for his niche. The Navy had traditions and symbolized adventure. But these were evil days for the Navy, in 1881. Lieutenants of the line were past 45 years of age; ships were rotting at their anchorages; gunnery and engineering had fallen into a desuetude that took the Spanish-American War to cure. Peary was pleased, and not a little proud of his change, he wrote his mother. But the future promised little. There was no meat in the present to feed that compelling urge he still felt within him. Where should he go? What should he do to better himself? The answer was still a riddle. He was underway in life; he felt sure of that. But for where?

Menocal made Peary his assistant. When a contract job turned up for a naval pier at Key West he sent Peary as an inspector. The contractor was a man of national reputation. Friends congratulated Peary on having this opportunity to learn from a great man. "The chance of a lifetime," they said. It was, but not in the sense they meant. Within six weeks the Congressional Naval Committee was studying a report that a "young upstart named Peary in the Civil Engineer Corps had made so much

trouble that the work had to stop." The truth came out later. The contractor's method was to sink iron plates for the pier by means of water jets that removed the sand allowing the plates to sink by gravity. The trouble was that instead of sand there was a conglomerate of coral and old iron junk, neither of which lent itself obediently to removal by water jets. After a brief struggle with coral and iron, sunken cargoes of brick and coal, tangled telegraph cables, and water-logged timbers, the contractor surrendered and escaped. Peary made a laconic report to Washington and offered to finish the job. His seniors sensibly told him to go ahead and make good. So improvising his own tools and appliances, building his own derricks and pile drivers from such cast-off material as he could find, Peary went ahead and made good.

But the bad luck that assailed him so often was working even this early in life. He fell ill of yellow fever. And just as he later watched his ship unloaded in Greenland while strapped to a board, he now had himself carried to the scene of activity as soon as the doctors would release him from quarantine. Today the pier still stands in mute testimony to the excellence of its builder. The contract price had been $30,000; Peary's cost about $6,000.

He had one more interlude to pass through before he could know. And in many ways this interlude was the most important of all.

Curiously enough the scene was laid in the tropics. After Key West, Peary had gone north to the naval

station at Coaster's Island, the location of the Naval War College at Newport, R. I. Menocal had been three times on the Isthmus Survey; and now he was to go again. At once he turned to his faithful young henchman, Robert Peary, who was delighted at the prospect of an expedition to the wilds of Nicaragua.

The first expedition left New York in 1884; the second on December 20, 1887. Before he returned, Peary, as a member and second in command, had gone through the very tempering process he needed for his exploring in the opposite direction so soon to follow. His jungle enterprise forms one of the most interesting chapters of his early life. The party remained 120 days in the field under the most strenuous and difficult conditions, but with the exact notes, measurements and data which determined a reduction of 16.21 miles in the distance and nearly $17,000,000 in the cost of the eastern section of the proposed canal. Peary filled the position of second in command. He was man of all work with the pioneers, and executive in camp: swimming and fording rivers, climbing trees to gain vision of the unknown country, running lines through tangled jungles where no more than ten feet ahead could be discerned until the *macheteros* had cut a path. In the rushing and perilous rivers his naval training stood him in good stead and he proved an excellent boatman. It also fell to his lot to keep the half-civilized natives loyal and diligent. No doubt his experience with these tribesmen, whom the other whites held in such contempt, helped greatly in his

subsequent important conquest of the northern Eskimos.

During his lonely nights in camp in the jungle Peary found time to solve one of the most serious and difficult problems connected with the operation of the huge waterway, that of the gates of its locks in which new and peculiar conditions were to be met. He devised rolling gates, so balanced and adjusted that they might almost be said to do their own work, to open and close themselves. So favorably impressed was Menocal with the designs and specifications that they were adopted and incorporated with favorable recommendations in the final official report.

Fortunately for Peary's future in the north the Nicaragua ship canal was finally given up. The enterprise was purely a private American one on its financial side; although the government was to survey the route and provide all the engineering data. And though Peary in all gave nearly two years of his life and went through two trying expeditions over the worst sort of terrain, the whole scheme was finally suspended until Roosevelt years later took it up where others had left off.

Thus the future Discoverer of the Pole had his baptism of fire in the wild places of the earth, and among a people and environment as far as geographically possible removed from the haunts that were to claim the best years of his life. One thing of it all he despised: the insect life. His unceasing struggle against ravenous mosquitoes, congo-flies, gnats,

spiders, and scorpions he never forgot. And he often used to cheer his shivering men in the polar regions, with tales that made them thankful, despite the cold, that an occasional body louse was their only parasite.

CHAPTER IV

THE INSPIRATION

FATE now used a very hackneyed device to swerve her puppet's progress towards the ultimate. Peary himself recorded the incident that was to make his name a household word:

"In the fall of 1885, I had completed my work on the maps and plans of the Government Nicaragua Interoceanic Ship-Canal Survey, from which I had returned the previous summer, and affairs had taken on an aspect which made it seem as if the project would inevitably be postponed indefinitely. Something was necessary to occupy my leisure from Navy Yard routine, and take the place of the subject to which I had devoted my surplus energy for the past six years. One evening, in one of my favorite haunts, an old book-store in Washington, I came upon a fugitive paper on the Inland Ice of Greenland. A chord, which as a boy, had vibrated intensely in me at the reading of Kane's wonderful book, was touched again. I read all I could upon the subject, noted the conflicting experiences of Nordenskjold, Jensen, and the rest, and felt that I must see for myself what the truth was of this great mysterious interior."

Peary did not visualize the North Pole at this moment. His was only a momentary excitation. What young man has not had the same momentary passion to see some distant part of the globe on reading the gripping passage?

"I read all I could upon the subject . . ." Those are the key words of his text. It is worth digressing for a moment to skim over what he read in order that we may carry with us the historical background young Peary began to soak himself in.

Henry VIII, King of England, formally began the struggle to navigate far northern waters in 1527, nearly one hundred years before the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth Rock. The incentive for this unique King's expedition was China's affluence. Commercial Europe then felt that the first voyager to find a short route to the rich Orient would soon be the wealthiest man in the world. Christopher Columbus had tried going west and thought he had reached his destination when he discovered the American continent. His maps show Asia where now lie Florida and Georgia. But the British seemed to know better and began plugging away at the ice-bound arctic.

The first good northing after Erik had discovered Greenland was made by John Davis in 1588. Davis rounded Cape Farewell, which forms the southern tip of Greenland, and cruised up the west coast to a point 1128 miles from the North Pole. This feat wiped out the failure of his countrymen, Willoughby and Chancellor, who had a few years before tried to

sail north around Russia, but had died miserably from scurvy with all their men. News of Davis's success spread rapidly through Europe and at once bold mariners began to flock northward, each hoping to find the magic passage through the ice that beset the top of the world. British, French, Dutch, German, Scandinavian and Russian vessels were numbered among that tragic host of failures. Lives and money were lavished in the futile effort. Yet almost the most interesting item of it all was that the British flag kept flying always just ahead of the others, save for the few brief years near the end of the 16th century when the Dutchman, Barents, held the record.

The next great traverse northward was made by Henry Hudson who tried the route around Asia again. In 1607 he sailed to Spitzbergen, Amundsen's base in 1925, and reached a latitude of 80°23′. This record stood for 165 years. But its significance is less than others in that easy open water extends higher over this sector of the arctic than in any other. This fact has a peculiar bearing on Peary's story because the lack of open water in the Greenland sector caused him to lose important financial support at the most critical stage of his life. Moreover Hudson unintentionally damaged Peary's plans nearly three centuries later by proving that sea life in the Spitzbergen area was the most plentiful in the world. He reported great multitudes of whales and walruses. As a result by the 17th century no less than 300 ships and 15,000 men were sent each summer to these

waters, the whole aggregation basing on the large islands thereabouts such as Spitzbergen. Hence we may readily see the logic with which Fiala, Abruzzi and others made so well known and far northern a land their starting point for polar work. In contrast Peary in his early attempts could use for his base no more northern spot than Etah just above the 78th parallel.

But the British were not of a mind to let Hudson's great record stand forever. In 1773 a British expedition under Phipps beat it by 25 miles. It is a matter of more than passing interest that Nelson of Trafalgar, then fifteen years old, was a member of this expedition. This was the first of a series of gallant modern attempts by England to find a Northwest Passage around the northern end of North America. But naval expediency in the form of much sea warfare postponed this arctic work considerably, though not long after our War of 1812 we find the British Navy at it again. Parry in 1819 got as far west in the American Archipelago as the 110th meridian, a location about north of the eastern central part of Canada. For this success he was awarded the £5000 prize then offered by Parliament as an encouragement to her arctic explorers to find a short sea way westward.

By 1827 Parry concluded that the Northwest Passage was a less inspiring goal than discovery of the North Pole. So he persuaded the government to back him in an attempt from Spitzbergen. By means of sledges he reached 82°45′, 435 miles from

the Pole. The story of this work is a dismal one of unremitting toil and hardship. But Parry's daring exploit of leaving the land and venturing out over the torn ice floes of the polar pack was hailed with delight and pride by the British public. He had gone further than anyone else and had succeeded in a new way: by sledge travel, man drawn.

Thus began the sledge era of arctic exploration as distinct from simply pushing a ship as far north as possible. Peary's work marked the climax of this era; while Amundsen's flight was the opening paragraph in a new chapter of the north.

From Parry's farthest to the moment when Lieutenant Peary made history in a second-handed bookshop arctic records form one long wail of agony by unhappy sledgers. A fearful disaster drew America into the field. Sir John Franklin with two fine British Navy ships manned by picked crews sailed north in 1845. Franklin was already famous as an explorer and naval governor. His effort was looked upon as a sure success. But he and his fine ships with their picked crews were swallowed up by the cold and ice of the north, not a man surviving. As there was no radio, the world was not aware of their fate. The world simply waited. Then England grew anxious. Relief expeditions were dispatched. American sympathy was aroused. Kane went north along the Greenland coast and did wonderfully well, laying much of the foundation for Peary's later work. Finally in 1859, an Englishman, Leopold McClintock, brought back the melancholy

tale of Franklin's fate; both ships crushed in the ice, the men trying to retreat south until, as the Eskimos said: "they fell down and died as they walked."

Kane's good work and entrancing account awakened fresh Arctic interest in the United States. Adventurous souls on this side of the Atlantic began to itch to beat the British records. In 1871 Charles Francis Hall sailed his ship, the *Polaris*, through Kane Basin clear to the shores of the Polar Sea, a piece of astonishing luck as events were soon to prove in the work of his less fortunate successors; though Nares in 1875 took his ship even further north. On this latter expedition Clements Markham reached a new record of 83°20′ with man-drawn sledges on the Polar Sea.

But just as man's efforts seemed once more to threaten the goal of the centuries a series of tragedies again marred arctic exploration. And so widespread was the horror they aroused that it looked as if the public would never again consent to any sort of communal support of northern work.

The first of these ill-fated American expeditions was taken out by Lieutenant DeLong, U. S. Navy, who commanded the steamer *Jeannette* when she was lost in the polar pack ice north of Siberia in 1879. DeLong left San Francisco in the summer and, after passing through Bering Sea, put his ship in the ice at Lat. 71°35′ north. The ship drifted northward and westward past the 77th parallel. She was finally crushed in the ice in June, 1881.

The second doomed expedition was leaving just as

the *Jeannette* was plunging out of sight. The then Lieutenant Greely was sent out in 1881 in command of an Army party to occupy one of a series of international circumpolar stations. He found open water above Melville Bay on the northwest Greenland sector and reached Lady Franklin Bay in Ellesmere Land, the scene of much of Peary's later work. From this base Lockwood and Brainard, Greely's two strongest men, reached a northing of 83°24′, beating the best British record by four miles. As the relief ship failed to arrive Greely retreated south with his party to Cape Sabine, also a scene of Peary's later northern base. Here, after a winter of indescribable horror, Greely was rescued. Only seven remained alive out of an original twenty-five.

This, generally speaking, was the historical background of young Peary's arctic reading in the autumn of 1885. And there was in Peary's case an added slant to pique his youthful love of adventure in the fact that the vast interior of Greenland was still an unsolved mystery. As he pointed out:

"Not one single determined effort having for its goal the east coast of Greenland has ever been made; and there is nothing to show that an intelligent and determined effort and the devotion of an entire season to the work would not be crowned with success. The question that naturally arises then is, how can it be done?"

No red-blooded young man that ever lived could stand around and ask himself such a question with-

out burning to solve it. Within a space of three weeks Peary had accumulated a roomful of charts. They didn't show much of the north except unfilled vacancies. And the immense interior of Greenland was just a white blank with not even a border to mark its northern limit. Did it reach to the Pole itself?

He began to read up in encyclopedias and other books of reference. He learned all the little men know of the land's interior; simply an elevated unbroken plateau of snow, 1500 miles in length and 900 in width, lifted from five to eight thousand feet and more above the level of the sea; an arctic desert —unless its interior contained a vast oasis of which men knew nothing. Beside this Arctic Sahara the African one pales into insignificance.

Between his books and his charts Peary soon worked out three routes for a practicable crossing of Greenland. One of these Nansen used in 1888. One proved completely successful when Peary himself crossed the northern end in 1891.

As there were no navy plans of importance on the horizon and since the lure of the North was proving irresistible, Peary finally asked for six months' leave. His request was met with some unofficial derision, and not a little flavor of official rebuff for suggesting such a voyage just after the DeLong and Greely fiascos. But he persisted. And since he had done so well in the Isthmian expeditions with little respite in the way of furlough, his application was finally approved.

In retrospect it seems very easy for a man to go to a

Canadian port and take passage on a whaler stopping at a Greenland port. But Lieutenant Peary was only a passenger bound on an utterly meaningless and futile mission. No whaling captain took passengers. It was much more profitable to take able-bodied seamen. And traveling of any sort cost money, something which Peary did not possess as his pay was close to $100 a month. But he borrowed $500 from his mother and with characteristic persistence he overcame one obstacle after another. Late May found him embarked on his first northern cruise as supercargo on the steam whaler, *Eagle*, out of Sydney, C. B.

The traverse to Greenland was a good taste of the years to come. Heavy gales swept down from Baffin Bay. Ice trash was encountered early, and thickened as Disco Island was approached. Wrote Peary:

"The ship was rolling and pitching as if mad, the decks awash with water, and the foam and spray driving over the rail and across the companionway in a blinding drift of snow; while overhead the rigging was shrieking and the staysails tense as iron in a wild northeasterly gale."

The words do not exaggerate, as anyone who has weathered a Baffin Bay blow will agree.

On June 6th, 1886, the *Eagle* left Peary at Godhavn, the little Danish station on Disco Island, while she continued away to the whaling grounds. The lone explorer had no equipment to speak of. He did

not know the handful of local Danes; who, in their turn, did not know him or his language. He had no access to portage necessary to take him the many miles up the fiord to a point from which he could reach the inland ice.

"*But I do not see?*" exclaimed the bewildered Danish Inspector over and over again as Peary explained that he wished to go to Ritenbenk, a tiny post near the edge of the ice, in order to make a reconnaissance inland.

"I need a boat. Man it with Eskimos. I need a little food!" Peary repeated his story. His efforts finally met with success. Not only did he secure the services of a boat and native crew, but a young Danish adventurer joined him when he reached Ritenbenk. This was Christian Maigaard, assistant director of the trading station. Maigaard spoke a little German. Peary knew a smattering of French. Neither used the other's tongue. Yet like the language of love, the language romance of adventure is universal. So it was that this pair of eager youths fared forth together up into the unknown ice-blink that beckoned in the eastern sky.

The little party landed at the foot of the cliffs bulwarking the inland ice on the morning of June 25th, 1886. Though the boat journey had been a trying one Peary could not wait. At once he set out. After ten hours hard climbing he found a practicable route to the glacial surface above the camp. Three days later the equipment, such as it was, had been *tumped* up nearly 2000 feet to the edge of the ice.

There the two small toboggan-like sledges were put into use. It was significant of the age of the members of the party that one sledge was called "Sweetheart," the other "Princess Thyra" (Denmark's youngest princess).

Then the Ice-Cap blew them a welcome.

"We lay down under the lee of the sledges," wrote Peary in his diary. "But the wind and the blinding sun made sleep an impossibility. The masses of black rock beyond the margin of the ice-blink were tremulous in the dazzling glares. The blue fiord far below us, glistening in some places like burnished, others like frosted, steel; and over and beyond the mountains, Disco Bay lay blue."

The diary goes on to say that after the wind came fog, which blotted out the sun. This, in turn, hardened the surface underfoot, so that the two men could start their climb toward the higher levels of the inland ice without sinking waist-deep at every step. Presently the fog changed to sleet; then the sleet to snow which drifted noiselessly about them.

Maigaard, who knew more of the ways of the north, stopped his friend and said in Danish: "It is not safe to go on."

Peary did not understand but replied: "This is not so bad." He knew from the other's face that the storm was worrying the assistant Governor.

"Impossible!" shouted Maigaard to make himself heard above the roaring of the wind.

Fortunately Maigaard had his way. And when

they had finally huddled down in lee of their toboggans, it was not long before the tempest drifted them over and proved that disaster might well have attended further attempt to climb that day. When a brief lull came they retreated to their tent on the land behind them where they stayed until July 5th on which date the storm finally ceased.

Again the pair sallied upward. No dogs were used; the two dragged their own sledges. This time there were crevasses to contend with. A discouraging head wind never left them. The bright sun reflected from the snow blinded them except when snow-glasses were used. At an elevation of 7525 feet —120 miles from their starting point, another storm struck them. They managed to camp in time and slept through it. Rations were cut down. Worn footgear was repaired. A cracked sledge gave concern, as without it the return journey would be nearly impossible.

Then came the great moment.

"We had six days' provisions left," Peary wrote at the time, "and being uncertain as to the changes in the lower portion of the ice-blink I decided to return."

The date was July 19, 1886. Robert Peary, still looking for his niche in life, stood there on the bare blue-white back of inland ice and gazed about before returning. Stood there looking about him as any other young American might have stood. His narrowed eyes traveled across the limitless desert

before him to the eastward, then back towards the black waters of the Waigat, with their red crests of the towering cliffs and the glimmering sweep northward towards the unknown Polar Sea. A stirring gust swept past and tweaked his cheek. About his feet played for a moment a little white snow eddy. Maigaard spoke, but his remark went unanswered. Suddenly a curious change began to creep over Peary. "He was like a man in a dream," said Maigaard afterwards. Something was being born in the heart of the man: something that was vital as the spark of life itself. A kind of spiritual beauty transfixed his face. Maigaard noted this beauty and fell as silent as his companion.

"I think——" began Peary falteringly.

Maigaard started at the note of emotion in the words he could not understand. Even Peary himself did not understand—yet; for he did not finish the sentence. But in that brief pause, that moment, had come the inspiration of his life. From that moment Robert Peary was consecrated to the task of wrenching from the White Arctic the secret men had through four centuries, died to learn. He did not think of the Pole specifically; nor of the Ice-Cap; not even of those poor wretches who had gone to their deaths year after year just beyond where he stood. Rather was his inspiration born of the cold defiance of the glittering whiteness all about him. *There was that in Peary which could not stomach the thought of man's defeat at the hands of the Frozen North.*

CHAPTER V

CONCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM

DETAILS of Peary's return from the first reconnaissance on the Ice-Cap in 1886 would, of themselves, form an interesting story. He nearly lost his life in a roaring glacial stream. Maigaard fell through a bridge over a deep crevasse and came within a hair's breadth of dragging Peary down after him. Another storm struck them and all but wiped them out. Their faces were blistered and their feet frosted. Their little sailboat came close to capsizing twice on their way back to Godhavn. The natives tried to desert. Food was insufficient. But to Peary it all meant little. His surging thoughts were otherwise engaged. Not for a waking moment could he escape the fact that the great inspiration of his life had come at last.

Again and again he pored over his charts. He computed the area of Greenland as close to 800,000 square miles. Once more he realized that only the barest fringe of this gigantic area was known: possibly 5000 miles along the southwest edge. No one knew what lay within the vast interior. No human path had bridged it. "What a feat to cross it first!" Peary exclaimed to a friend.

But in his heart was the inspiration to beat the wind and the cold and the snow that had beaten so many other men, and of which he himself had tasted on the Ice-Cap.

By December, 1886, he had brought out his account of the summer's ice trip in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society. One discerning reader said of the author: "Peary writes more than well; he makes one feel that there is something spiritually compelling behind what he says." This is of particular interest when quoted beside Peary's words to Roosevelt twenty years later after his failure in 1906:

"To me the final and complete solution of the Polar mystery—is the thing which should be done for the honour and credit of this country, *the thing which it is intended that I should do, and the thing that I must do!*"

But, "Don't be a fool!" was the gist of what his professional colleagues retorted to him when he spoke of his hopes to them. Pressure of public opinion had caused Congress to pass a bill appropriating funds without limit for the rescue of the missing Army men. But the same emotion that had brought about such generosity recoiled upon itself and fairly growled at Peary when he dared air his hopes of going north.

Ensuing eighteen months were very much alike in one way: they were full of the struggle between Peary's sense of duty in his professional work and his sense of steely determination in his dream to be the first man across Greenland.

Like the ironic misfortune of having an arctic inspiration at a moment when no theme could be more unpopular was Fate's decree that Peary should fall in love at this critical moment in his life.

Josephine Diebitsch was the daughter of Professor Diebitsch of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D. C. Robert Peary had met her occasionally at the various official functions to which his naval rank brought him a rather unwilling guest. She was a bit taller than average, and known for her lovely color and graceful figure. She was a Washington belle with few competitors. Chief among the impalpable ornaments of nature was her *finesse*. It was this *finesse* more than anything else that appealed to the intensely earnest young naval engineer its owner gradually came to know and appreciate. To him it appeared in the guise of a close attention to what he said, an intelligent interest in his point of view, and a gossamer-like but enveloping sympathy in the personal tribulations he soon found himself confiding in her.

The trouble was that, besides her beauty and charm, Josephine had a very keenly developed sense of humor. So she laughed her ardent Robert's attentions off. With a gay smile she sent him south to the tropics; and she smilingly welcomed him when he returned. With indulgent banter she dispatched him to his great quest in the north; and welcomed him with smiling pride in their friendship on his arrival home. But she did not reckon on her man. He wasn't like the others. And her humor tweaked

his smouldering passion as the north wind had taunted his courage.

"Now I shall wait no longer," he finally wrote her in the summer of 1888. "You have put me off before. There have been interfering things which I couldn't control. This summer . . ."

Josephine was a woman, and her woman's intuition told her this was no moment for dimpling smiles; nor this vehement lover a creature to be subdued by haughty mien. She resorted to the only kind of tactics that might have won. She tried to argue him out of his distressing passion by logic. "We are just closing the town house," she wrote back. It was on a broiling Washington August morning her slow pen found the words. "And I want a real wedding. Everyone is out of town. The heat is stifling. The carpets are not even down." A very effective letter. It ought to have staved off any man until autumn, at least, when festivities could have been appropriate for the occasion. It would have staved off any man but Robert Peary.

They were married a week later with the thermometer 101° in the shade and the carpets rolled down in one room.

A few days before the ceremony Peary discussed with his bride-to-be the question of inviting his mother down. In fact they had discussed the matter off and on for several days. "It would kill her to come down," averred the son, despite the devotion in his heart. "The heat and the excitement . . ." He didn't add what both he and Josephine knew only too

Bride and Groom.

well, that the thought of giving up her boy might be most damaging of all for Mary Peary. "But we'll have to wire at least," was Josephine's contention. "And I think the fair thing is to let her know the day before. Then she won't feel you forgot her in the midst of your affairs."

Ultimately the wire went to the old home in Portland, Maine. The morning of the wedding Josephine rubbed her eyes twice before she could believe them when she saw Mary Peary sitting prim and upright in the room with the rolled back carpets, the thermometer just short of 100°!

They were a very well-matched pair; very much in love; and very, very poor except in high hope and other such imponderables as form the chief assets of most young married couples. They went to New York and lived down town in a single room. They gave themselves an allowance of $50 a month divided equally to cover all expenses. But the husband, pursuing his great quest with new vigor, found his activities sometimes curtailed by poverty. Occasionally as early as the 15th of the month he not infrequently borrowed 25¢ from the bride in order to eke out his end of the budget.

. . . "*and I am going to be the first man across Greenland*," were the words the pink-cheeked Josephine heard nearly as often as the bridegroom's declaration of love on those days. But Peary didn't boast to the scientific societies whose doors he was storming. To them he declared with scholarly vehemence:

"The distance across at this point [of his 1886 reconnaissance] is less than four hundred miles, and I have not the slightest doubt but that, by starting at the right season of a favorable year, the distance across and back could be accomplished in one summer."

After which he would bring forth his evidence laboriously collected from every book or chart or pamphlet he could lay his hands on.

Things began slowly but surely to move his way. Professor Heilprin of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences became Peary's fast friend. "I really believe you can cross Greenland," said Heilprin. "And if you do it first, you shall have made a name for yourself. Future help will come easily after a feat like that."

But Fate had other plans, as Fate usually did just when Robert Peary seemed set in a clean and comfortable groove. Let Josephine Peary tell it:

"He came in one afternoon looking as if he had just seen someone die."

She should have added that the blue eyes were sunken and the silky golden moustache with its jaunty upturn now drooped.

"He sat down heavily on the bed. I said: 'Bert, what in heaven's name has happened?' He shook his head; he seemed unable to speak. I was frightened for a moment. I thought of his mother. He saw it in my face. Then directly he said, '*Jo, Nansen has crossed Greenland.*'"

The pathos of it. . . .

"This forestalling of my work was a serious blow to me," wrote Peary grimly. "But my duty to the Service left me helpless and I could only fall back upon the other northern route." He did not add that he was stunned. He felt the entire structure of his plans had been swept away. The great feature upon which he had hung so many of his arguments was the vaunted priority of his proposed trip. Priority was the one thing above all others that appealed to the American mind, academic as well as lay.

But Peary was of sterner stuff than to surrender. He was to feel the impact of many a fiercer blow of fortune than Nansen's usurpation of his dream. Two weeks later he was at it again. He sent a series of circular letters to the influential men whose attention he had already won, pointing out, that after all, Nansen's crossing stood out more for its daring than for its scientific revelations. The route had lain away south across the narrow neck only a little above Cape Farewell. There was no need to belittle it. Nansen deserved all the honor the world could give him. It was simply a case of there being much more to do: to determine the northern extent of Greenland, for instance. This was an extremely critical bit of knowledge. For if the continent extended far out into the Polar Sea, as many scholarly men supposed it to, it therefore would provide the long-looked-for royal highway to the Pole itself.

But the damage to Peary's great plan wrought by Nansen's success was more far-reaching than

Peary in his most sombre moment had pictured it. Not only did those whom he had previously aroused rebuff him now, but there began to be whispered rumors among his professional colleagues that "if he went on being a silly fanatic like this the Navy was no place for Robert Peary." Yet so conscientious was his service work that none dared affront him by suggesting any lack of proficiency. To add to his anxieties his mother became unwell. She had fretfully refused to leave the young married couple and go home. Life was very bitter for her, no doubt, in those days. To accentuate the situation, Robert could not forget that it was money borrowed from his mother that had made the 1886 reconnaissance possible. He had looked forward to an early first-crossing following the trip with Maigaard; which all should have netted him substantial profit from books and lectures. Now he was misunderstood, defeated, torn by love and duty and debt; ridiculed by important acquaintances; reproached by friends.

But he did not falter. He persuaded his mother to return to the old home in Portland. He reformed his shattered arguments. He began to play up the human interest side of the Eskimos. He devised new schemes for conquering the north. He gritted his teeth—for he did not yet take easily to public speaking—and delivered himself from every platform accessible.

"He should have been the leader of a great social movement instead of a geographical pioneer," said

one contemporary. "He was too young and inexperienced to be a polished speaker in any sense. But his intense earnestness and the driving impact of his logic gave him a natural eloquence as effective as any I have ever heard."

The Yeast of Inspiration was working.

Towards the end of 1889 he began to make his hearers forget just the *crossing* aspect of his projected trip and to forge in their subconscious selves a growing desire to see the Greenland mystery solved, no matter what the method. In effect Peary was learning the first great lesson a man-who-wants-to-do-something-different must learn: which is to be a good showman.

One of his favorite lecture themes ran like this:

"Geographically and topographically Greenland has been, since the day its black cliffs loomed through the arctic fog upon the eyes of Erik, a land of mystery, and a source of constantly increasing interest and speculation. It has been traced farther into the *terra incognita* that encompasses the Pole than any other land on the globe. There are reasons for thinking that its northern headland may be one abutment of a bridge of islands, over which, through years of arctic summer days and winter nights, a portion of the human race slowly migrated from Siberia, via the Pole, to this hemisphere. Its interior is the last of those glacial conditions which for ages submerged northern Europe, and northern North America in its icy flood. Its northern shores are famous with the names of Americans who have

dragged its sable headlands and icy bays out of the Arctic fog and night."

In midwinter 1890–91 the tide began to turn just at a moment when Peary's bank account had been reduced to $8 and the Navy Department had concluded his services were needed elsewhere than in the neighborhood of New York and Philadelphia. The Brooklyn Institute wrote a strong and unexpected letter of encouragement which said in part: "We hope you may be enabled to carry out this well-considered and important project (to cross North Greenland), and that the enterprise will receive the hearty endorsement we believe it merits." The Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, and the American Geographical Society fell in line.

Finally, deeming the time ripe at last, Peary sent in to the Navy Department an application for eighteen months' leave, accompanied by strong letters from Judge Daly, Professors Leidy, Putnam, Adams and others. The document was addressed to the Secretary of the Navy, the Hon. Benjamin F. Tracy, and read as follows:

U. S. Navy Yard, League Island, Pa.
Feb. 16, '91.

Sir:

I beg to transmit herewith an "Outline of a Project for Reaching the Northern Terminus of Greenland via the Inland Ice" and in connection therewith respectfully request leave of absence for eighteen months from May 1st, 1891, with permission to

apply for an extension, to enable me to carry my project into execution.

I also transmit copies of letters, Memorials and Resolutions, from some of the principal Geographical and Scientific Institutions of the country, endorsing my project.

In addition I beg to submit the following brief statement bearing upon the matter:

In the summer of 1886 (your predecessor, Hon. William C. Whitney, having granted me eight months' leave for the purpose), I visited Greenland and with one volunteer companion, a young Danish Officer, penetrated 100 miles over the great glacial Ice-Cap of the country in Lat. 69°30′N.

The elevation attained by me (7500 ft.) was greater than that of any previous explorer, and the distance penetrated, greater than in any previous expeditions, (the Lapps' of Nordenskjold's second expedition excepted.)

I also explored some 50 miles of the shore of this great Inland Ice Sea, and brought home a valuable collection of fossils and other geological and Natural History material.

A brief narrative of my work published in the *Bulletin of the Am. Geo. Soc.* elicited favorable comment both here and abroad, and space was given to the results of my work in several foreign scientific publications.

The soundness of certain views which I advanced on my return from Greenland having been partially proved by the experience of Dr. Nansen, the Norwegian Explorer who recently crossed the southern part of Greenland, I now desire the opportunity to carry those views into actual execution, in their broadest scope, and feel confident of my ability to do so, on the lines indicated in the enclosed "Outline, etc., etc."

I will not make any extended reference to my project as its salient points, its feasibility, its freedom from danger and hardships, and the gains to science resulting from its successful execution, are noted in the communications of the scientific bodies accompanying this, with much greater weight of authority than any statement of mine would have. But I beg to say that wherever my project has been presented, its thoroughly American qualities of simplicity, effectiveness, and economy, have created an immediate and favorable impression.

I cannot however refrain from noting the following as illustrating the directness of my proposed route: Lockwood in attaining his "farthest" from Ft. Conger and return, following the sinuosities of the coast, making detours to avoid rough ice or open water, and retracing his steps to get his entire load forward, traveled 1069¾ statute miles. (Greely Rep. Vol. I.) The distance from the head of Whale Sound (276′ of lat. south of Ft. Conger) via the Inland Ice to the "farthest" and return is, by reason of the airline directness of the route, only 1028 statute miles! As to the obstacles and difficulties of traveling on the two routes there is no comparison.

With the small party, the unbroken snow for a road, the never to be foreseen vagaries of Arctic seas and polar ice floes eliminated, and the entire Arctic summer in which to travel, I regard all contingencies in my plan as completely within the scope of experience and careful provision, as those of a winter's journey across our own prairies; and I feel confident of my ability to compel success.

I propose to contribute to the project the time and services of myself and the other members of my party, and my leave pay for the time that I am engaged in the work (this latter being the extent

of my financial resources). The remainder of the money necessary to carry the project through, will be contributed by various scientific societies.

It is an age of truth seeking and of some truth getting, and no fact, however remote it may appear from daily experience or how trivial in its human relations, is valueless. The restless activity of Nineteenth Century explorers is balked by nothing, and if I do not determine the coast line of northern Greenland, the risk and the honor is likely to be assumed by a representative of some other nation.

Denmark sends out an expedition to the east coast of Greenland the coming spring. A Norwegian expedition intends going through Behring Straits the coming summer, the Berlin *Geog. Soc.* sends out a party, the coming spring, to the west coast of Greenland for a year's scientific investigation, and there are other foreign projects likely to materialize in the near future.

I am aware that at present it is the fashion of popular sentiment to decry further Arctic work and to meet every proposal in that direction with a "Cui bono?" Scientists, however, are a unit in their appreciation of the valuable results to be obtained in this direction, and the attainment of the object which I have set before myself would be something of which any country would be proud and something which would compel decided popular approval.

In conclusion, I sincerely trust, that as my work cannot fail to make valuable additions to scientific information, and to reflect credit upon that Service of which you are the distinguished head, and of which I have the honor to be a member, you will be pleased to grant my request, especially as I ask no

assistance from the Government beyond the granting of my leave.

Very respectfully,
R. E. PEARY,
Civil Engineer, U. S. N.

HON. B. F. TRACY,
Secretary of the Navy,
Washington, D. C.

The application was approved. The American Geographical Society appropriated $1000; Professor Putnam $1000 for an ethnological exhibit for the Columbian Exposition, the New York *Sun* $1000 for letters; Mr. Verhoeff $2000; and Professor Heilprin of Philadelphia brought in several thousand dollars by organizing a party to go up and return on the same ship the summer it left.

Five years had now passed since Peary's first reconnaissance in 1886. It was in May, 1891, that the Philadelphia papers in a casual and rather perfunctory fashion reported that the Newfoundland sealer, *Kite*, Captain Richard Pike, was outfitting at a wharf in that city for the North, with an Arctic expedition on board, headed by a civil engineer of the Navy, named Peary. A small party of Philadelphia scientists, under the lead of Professor Heilprin, were to accompany the *Kite* to her destination, to return on her. A year later another steamer would be dispatched to bring home the party should there be any survivors to come back. The whole bearing of the public toward the enterprise was one of

mingled compassion and indifference. That a single individual with a mere handful of a party, one slow and feeble old ship, and little or no financial backing should dare engage in a contest to which all the power, means and resources of the government had lately been brought to bear twice with only failure as a dividend, seemed little short of madness and certain to end in speedy retreat or complete disaster; perhaps both. In New York where the first northward stop was made, conditions were practically repeated: the wharf loafers, the idle, the curious, boarded the *Kite* as she lay alongside the Bridge pier. But no one seemed to take the event seriously.

And the bride?

Josephine was aboard.

Said one writer of the day: "Dramatic interest is added and temerity emphasized by the fact that the wife of the explorer is aboard the *Kite*. She will be the first white woman to attempt a winter north of the Danish settlements of south Greenland." Another writer put it more compactly: "Now we know he's crazy!" A common phrase in the life of every man who refuses to let the crowd think for him.

CHAPTER VI

WINNING THE ESKIMOS

WITHOUT the Eskimos Peary would never have reached the North Pole. His utilization of Eskimo labor was one of the great triumphs of his life. This phase of his story has never been written. It is proper to interject it here because a full understanding either of the man or of his exploits is impossible unless seen in the light of his dealings with the North Greenland natives.

He once put his viewpoint succinctly and in prophetic vein:

"I have often been asked: 'Of what use are Eskimos to the world?' They are too far removed to be of any value for commercial enterprises; and, furthermore, they lack ambition. They have no literature; nor, properly speaking, any art. They value life only as does a fox, or a bear, purely by instinct. But let us not forget that these people, trustworthy and hardy, will yet prove their value to mankind. With their help, the world shall discover the Pole."

There are about 30,000 Eskimos in the world. They are supposed to have originated in northern

Asia as Tartars or some other family of Mongols. In support of this theory we have not only much ethnological evidence but several bits of unexpected corroboration. When Mrs. Peary brought a young girl of the Smith Sound tribe to the United States in 1894, the first and only thing that ever jarred the native from her superb impassiveness was the sight of a Chinaman on the street. At once she broke away from her companion and ran to the Oriental and attempted to engage him in conversation through the medium of her own language. Later in Washington she was seen by several members of the Chinese Legation, who immediately surrounded her and began talking to her in the Chinese language, mistaking her for one of their own countrymen.

The Smith Sound tribe has been called the Whale Sound tribe, the Polar Eskimos, the Arctic Highlanders, and other names derived from their geographical position. Though their word roots are similar to those of all other Eskimo tribes their dialect is distinct. Also their code of customs and tradition is to some slight extent at variance with those of their cousins, indicating an isolation of very many centuries.

The tribe consists of slightly more than 35 families, or 200 men, women and children who wander back and forth along over 600 miles of coastline. They usually live and travel in groups of three or four families. Greater concentration of numbers would be dangerous on account of the scarcity of food. There is no religion; no money: no government:

no permanent property, except clothing and hunting implements. There is no written language. Their unit and limit of tribal organization is the family. Their sole diet consists of meat and blubber, varied very occasionally by the eggs of the little auk and eider duck. The tribe owes its existence to the fact that selfishness is practically unknown. Game is fairly plentiful at times, but its acquisition difficult when constant cold, darkness, howling blizzards and the discouragements of drifting ice and rock-strewn shores so heavily handicap the most fortunate. The net result of these conditions is a socialistic division of wealth. The successful hunter of today feeds and clothes his equally hard-working but less lucky neighbor. Tomorrow conditions may be reversed.

When Peary started north in 1891 he went equipped with all that he could read about this little tribe of North Greenland natives. The spot he had picked off the chart for his northern residence was, so he gathered from the few books available on the subject, about in the center of the hunting preserve of this little-known group. No doubt he would come in prompt and frequent contact with them. It therefore behooved him to be prepared for any eventualities.

He found that nearly all accounts agreed in several important details, viz.: that all Eskimos are filthy, animal-like, treacherous, and stupid; that it is better to avoid them; that they steal; that they are cruel; that they are guilty of savage and ummentionable practices.

With some foreboding Peary noted that the illustrious Kane, who had been more indulgent than any other white man toward them, had written:

"When they (the Eskimos) were first allowed to come aboard, they were very rude and difficult to manage. They spoke three or four at a time, to each other, and to us, laughing heartily at our ignorance in not understanding them. They were incessantly in motion, going everywhere, trying doors and squeezing through dark passages, round casks and into the light again, anxious to touch and handle everything they saw, and asking for or endeavoring to steal everything they touched."

Peary having like all other young Americans been brought up on the tales of Indian outrage, had no reason to doubt the picture Kane painted. There were volumes of such matter to convince the young naval officer that he was going among a dangerous and contemptible group of savages. There was no evidence of extenuating circumstances. He admitted afterward that he had no possible excuse for not believing Kane and other chroniclers.

It was just a character trait of Peary's that he always preferred to keep an open mind until he could form his own conclusions from first hand experience.

When he landed in North Greenland for the first time he concluded not to arm himself openly against the natives, though he would be on his guard; moreover, he did not dread their first arrival. Instead, he told his rather anxious men (who had also read Kane and the others):

"The first thing to do is, of course, to select a suitable site for our camp. Then unless the Eskimos come to us, it is essential that we communicate with them. I believe that one or more of their hunters would be of great advantage to us. Moreover, I want them living near us. I wish to become well acquainted with these most isolated and northerly of all people. And, for the purpose of studying this interesting tribe, I hope to induce not a few of them to spend the winter months at or near our camp."

Suffice it to say his party were not enthusiastic over this platform.

From the first Peary treated the new arrivals as equals. His specific reason for this was his disbelief in the popular idea that white travelers in remote lands were regarded as gods by the aborigines. He believed that the average aborigine is just as content with his own way as we are with ours; just as convinced of their superior knowledge; and that he adjusts himself to environment with this knowledge just about the way a white man does. It is significant that the minute the Eskimos perceived this attitude in the white man they found upon their shores they instinctively tried to live up to the standard Peary's courtesy implied.

But there were some standards that were too fixed to change in the twinkling of an eye. One was that of personal cleanliness. First sight of the natives certainly bore out the harsh descriptions of other explorers. Men, women and children were garbed in greasy ragged articles of skin. Their faces were

grimy. There was a distinctly disagreeable odor about them. There seemed to be no modesty in their personal habits. Vermin obviously inhabited their clothes and skin tents.

Peary promptly accepted all these items and then began to evaluate them according to their less visible corollaries. He looked into the matter of clothing. He found that shirts and breeches were very greasy because this happened to be the height of the hunting season.

Plentiful herds of walrus, seals and narwhal in summer make the temperate months a long series of butcherings in preparation for the hard winter ahead. Moreover, as the sun is high and warm, it behooves the tribe to wear the oldest clothing they own. When the sun disappeared in October and the mercury dropped until it froze to a solid lump, there appeared as if by magic, shirts of blue fox as clean and beautiful as if just out of a Fifth Avenue furrier's.

Personal habits revealed even more when scrutinized. The strong body smell explorers so despised was 95% the fragrance of seal meat, raw and blubbery. It was a smell that pervaded every body, every bit of clothing, every tent and igloo in the country. And, strange to say, it was a smell that Peary and his men grew to look forward to when traveling in the dark cold months from village to village. For it was a smell that stood for warmth and food and happy laughter. This has been the experience of all men who have really come to know the tribe.

Nor did Peary find the bodies themselves so unclean. Quite true it was that an Eskimo never bathed from the day of his birth to the day of his death. But he slept stripped naked every night. And the caribou or musk-ox skins in which he slept and on which he *rubbed off* his bodily dirt were cleaned once or twice each moon by the wife. Cleaning was done by laying the skin on the ground in low temperatures and kneading into it fine powdery snow with the feet. The writer once doubted the efficacy of this method. He owned a light blue-striped gray steamer rug that had become nearly black from ship dirt, grease and soot. He gave it to Ahdukahingwah when she boasted that she could make it clean. She disappeared outside where the spirit glass showed 54° below zero. An hour later she brought the rug back looking as if it had just come off the shop counter: every stripe showing and the wool as fluffy as when new. Subsequent investigation revealed that the process was simply one of forming an amalgam between the minute particles of snow and the atoms of oil and dirt. This amalgam was in the shape of rough globules that could be kicked out.

Of course they were lousy, but so are 60% of the white race. And Peary soon found they were probably less lousy because every few days the woman of the igloos took the skins out and hung them up until the unfortunate pedicularis grew numb with cold. Then she lightly beat the skin and its inhabitants fell out.

Peary found the men savage with their dogs and wives. He saw Sipsu and other splendid drivers throw a thirty foot lash into a dog with a pistol-like report, causing the poor wretch to roll in agony on the ice. He saw men speak so harshly to their women that they winced. But in the course of time he saw also that on rubber ice it was the savage whip that saved the sledge; and the exaction of obedience from the wife meant safety for the baby in emergency. Many and many a time he discovered the same men to be as tender as any woman over the pregnant mother or whimpering infant.

He found the whole gang lazy: singing, gluttonous, indifferent, without ambition, unmoral, wholly lacking modesty by white standards. But all that was only half his find. There came a day when the walrus herd steamed up the fiord. Then all hands put out in their skin kayaks. The women ran along the shore and waited to help with the hauling and cutting. "Ten hours of this was enough to do up my men thoroughly," wrote Peary. But while the white men slept the natives continued. After 32 hours of back-breaking labor the Eskimos came ashore, and threw themselves wet and exhausted to the ground for a few hours' sleep. Then they went at it again. Lazy men don't work like that.

Peary found them inclined to pilfer articles such as illustrated magazines, a tin cup, a pencil and paper, mirror, a red handkerchief; sometimes candy and sugar. But what parents have not found the same nefarious tendencies among their offspring? More-

over, it turned out that there was no true sense of guilt when the culprit was discovered.

They were cowardly, too, on the Ice-Cap, sometimes in darkness when the storm was high; occasionally out on the Polar Sea; always on the water. Yet the same men would face a raging musk-ox herd, a roaring bear, a bellowing walrus herd (in their frail kayaks), a howling blizzard. How explain the curious paradox? In time Peary with admirable discernment, found that to the Eskimo the Ice-Cap and the Polar Sea, and the open water were the dwelling places of evil spirits. Man or beast brought no qualms to the hearts of his hunters. It was only the Almighty Devil that shattered the native nerves.

They were unmoral and traded wives. They were unreliable. But so was the white man: didn't he make promises he couldn't carry out? They had no ideals. But neither had the white man who never corrected his diet according to the strict rules of the tribe. They were inferior. But so was the white man who succumbed so easily to the cold.

It was all in the point of view. Peary's perspicuity soon let him see how wrong his predecessors had been, whereupon he made up his mind on two things: first, to learn the wonderful tricks the Eskimos had learned about living in the Frozen North; and second, to exchange for this priceless knowledge any help, both material and spiritual, that he could possibly give to the little tribe he found himself so soon beginning to love.

Having the desire to learn, Peary's native knowl-

edge grew rapidly from the first day's contact. He discarded the British, Belgium, French and Dutch idea that dogs were impractical traction animals in the Far North because they ate too much. He learned to drive and care for dogs in native fashion, feeding the exhausted animals to their team-mates in an emergency.

He learned to dress like an Eskimo: with light, windproof furs fitting almost skin-tight, in place of the ponderous woolen garments that had so handicapped his predecessors. He learned the value of light water-tight boots; of birdskin shirts; of long sleeves and short mittens; of mid-body air-spaces to reduce sweating; and of fox-tail ringlets about the most vulnerable parts of the body.

He learned the technique of building a snow-igloo, something no white man had hitherto mastered. He applied to this snug structure the native principles both of ventilation and of insulation. He discovered how to choose the snow for it; and to what depth the entrance should be made in order to protect the bed platform. As a result he was, in later years, able to take tenderfoot white assistants into the field and get splendid results with them during the first season.

He learned the value of laying in a supply of fresh meat during the proper hunting seasons. In consequence scurvy never became a factor in his expeditions, whereas among those which had preceded his—such as Kane's and Greely's—scurvy and famine were usually deciding factors in the work.

He learned where game was most plentiful by listening to native teaching; and what methods of search were most successful.

He discovered the psychology of the native, and so was able to organize the tribe almost with the efficacy he would have used with a large band of trained white helpers. This also made it possible for him to bring back to civilization almost the first and only complete ethnological study of stone-age man that has ever been garnered.

In return he gave the Eskimos much. He improved their supply of useful sledge material. Hitherto they had had to depend on driftwood, of which there was very little in North Greenland. He brought and left them enough lumber to last for years.

Of necessary implements of which there was a total lack he gave them a great quantity: needles, knives, rifles, tools, cooking utensils, and so on. He provided them with charts and binoculars, and boats. He taught them the use of mechanical instruments, such as the augur which many members of the tribe had never seen before.

Best of all he confirmed and strengthened their self-respect, something that even the missionary does not always do. He did not treat them as heathen savages, but as self-reliant men with whom he was in a position to exchange valuable knowledge. He told them about coffee, and tobacco and alcoholic drinks, pointing out that eventually men would come to them and try to trade with them with such articles.

He planted a warning lesson deep in their hearts against such lures of civilization, a lesson that survives strong even to this day.

At the end of his work Peary happily and with the justice of deep conviction declared:

"The effect of my Expeditions upon those children of the North has been to raise the entire tribe to a condition of affluence. Seven years ago many a man in this tribe possessed no knife, and many a woman no needle. Few of the men possessed Kayaks, or skin canoes; and he was indeed well off who had a spear or harpoon shaft made of a single piece of wood. Today men and women are amply supplied with knives and needles. Every adult man and half-grown boy has his canoe. Most of the men have guns. And every hunter is supplied with the best of wood for his lance, his harpoon, his seal-spear, and his sledge. The effect of these improvements in their weapons has shown itself in an improved condition of the tribe. The death rate has decreased; and the birth rate is perceptibly rising."

CHAPTER VII

FIRST CROSSING OF GREENLAND

IT is always interesting to see a young man with a new idea go out and try it. But for him to prove that he has the right idea, when millions might have thought it out ahead of him—but didn't—makes a thrilling tale. That was what Peary did when he established himself in Inglefield Gulf on the northwest corner of Greenland in 1891 and set about crossing the Inland Ice to find out what lay within Greenland and how far north that unknown continent extended.

No man who has not led an expedition to the ends of the world knows the exquisite zest with which young Peary made the entry in his diary: "At five in the afternoon, of June 6, 1891, the *Kite* cast off from the foot of Baltic Street, Brooklyn, and swung out into the East River." Leader of his own enterprise, master of his own Destiny, Peary felt at last that he had life within his grasp; his to mould according to his own abilities.

No woman who has not followed her man blindly into the unknown, as did the first woman, knows the exquisite thrill that one woman knew when her man made entry in the same diary:

Josephine Peary.

"Mrs. Peary accompanied the party. Possessed of youth, health, energy . . . I believed that in many ways her presence would contribute to the valuable results of the expedition, as they were invaluable to me in the preparation. Events proved the entire correctness of this belief."

Heavy Arctic ice was met in the Straits of Belle Isle behind Newfoundland. But Peary's sanguine mood refused to be discouraged. Down the Labrador came the usual gales with heavy rain and hail storms. But Peary felt stronger than any tempest and refused to go below with the seasick members of his party. On June 27th anchor was dropped at Godhavn and acquaintance renewed with the hospitable Danes whom he had met in 1886. One of the rich South Greenland Eskimos who had known Peary as a single man in '86 came aboard here. He looked Mrs. Peary over with admiring interest. Then he turned to Peary and learning that the white woman was the explorer's wife inquired eagerly: "Where you catch 'um?"

It is interesting that the Danish colonists and natives spoke with bated breath of the dangers of such a venture as he had planned, despite their residence in the North. But their words fell on deaf ears and were met with smiles of an assurance that mere warnings could never disturb. The ship departed and soon was jammed in the ice of Melville Bay and had to be dynamited clear. But that was an incident that Peary had counted on.

Then she came free. Her escape was symbolical of

Peary's state of mind: he had gained his leave, he had won support, he had secured his ship, he had surmounted the manifold dangers of the sea; and here at last he was on the threshold of success. Nothing could stop him now. "The worst is over," he wrote. "No travail on the Ice-Cap can ever compare in physical labor or nervous strain with what I have been through in the past five years. Now I can begin my true work unfettered."

But once more Destiny had another plan. As so many, many times happened in his life Peary was not to find his prize so easy as it looked. A cruel accident crushed his leg and crippled him completely.

Twenty-four hours after the disaster he made his usual calm clear entry of what happened:

"About eight o'clock on Saturday evening, July 11th, the *Kite* being then engaged in ramming a passage through some comparatively heavy ice, I stepped to the stern rail as she was backing for another blow to watch her behavior. Just as I reached the rail a large cake of ice struck the rudder, jamming it hard over, and tearing the wheel from the hands of the two men on duty. One of them was thrown clear over the wheel and across the deck. The next instant the iron tiller had caught my leg between it and the house and snapped both bones just above the ankle."

He did not write fully what followed. Perhaps he was kind enough not to. Perhaps he felt that his own judgment was impugned. Briefly, this is what happened: The injured man was carried below.

His crushed and shattered leg received the best care of the surgeon. Then, while he lay helpless and suffering on the hard transom, the scientific members of the party who were scheduled to return south with the ship joined together on deck forward and held a cabal.

"There is only one thing to do," said the spokesman. "Take him back with us. It was a foolhardy plan anyway, for him to stay up here with his wife and so small a party. Now that he is completely out of the running the only sane action for the rest of us is to quietly, but with determination, insist that no one be landed."

The others agreed. They then went to the Captain. He said: "I take orders only from Lieutenant Peary." To which the spokesman retorted that the Lieutenant was incapacitated and in no state of mind to judge what was best. Whereupon the doughty Skipper declared, "that if Mrs. Peary says turn back, I'll do it!"

This put the final decision up to the wife, a plan that well suited the passengers who felt certain that no woman would wish to be left in the Arctic with a crippled husband, no matter how gallant his intentions might be. It was not impossible in the present case that Peary would be a cripple for life. Surgical facilities were by no means of the best.

But the cabal did not reckon on the valor of the wife. "If he wants to be taken home, all right," she quietly replied when the suggestion was broached. "I will talk it over with my husband." She knew

her man only too well. Meanwhile, Peary had become suspicious that something might be put over on him and had had himself stretched right under the binnacle. So when the compass showed a homeward course he at once demanded an explanation. When his wife told him the plan to take him home he vehemently refused to listen. In the end he had his way and was landed, July 27th, strapped to a plank and stowed in his little tent. The ship left on the 29th.

At once began Peary's full responsibility. He alone of the little party had had northern experience. Astrup, Langdon Gibson and Verhoeff were very young. Matt Henson and Cook were not designed to take the sledging work. It was a matter of critical judgment just where to put the house; how to plan the Ice-Cap attack; when to begin hunting; what to do about the natives. Peary, helpless but undismayed, assumed the full burden of it all.

The smoothness and facility with which plans went forward testified to the thoroughness with which the Leader had planned. The house he had designed was a small affair of plain lumber, 12′ x 24′. Canvas over a light framework formed a low vestibule or passageway running clear around it. Snow was banked outside the whole structure. Details of warming and ventilation, always difficult in the Far North, were also matters of original design by the young engineer.

Heavy snow began to fall on August 28th. But the house was built and all stores arranged around it.

By this time Peary was hobbling about on his crutches gazing with longing looks at the glacier near the fiord's head which led to the Inland Ice.

His mission was to cross the north end of Greenland. Could he recover full use of his stiff muscles and splintered bones in time for the spring trip? The knitting had been normal, but there remained a suspicious awkwardness in the tendons that hinted of trouble later on.

He called the house Red Cliff after the lichened bluffs behind it. He established a rigid routine that kept all hands very busy. Birthdays were carefully observed and celebrated. Gibson, Verhoeff, Cook and Astrup were sent out on short expeditions in the whaleboat to examine the surrounding locale. Charts, found to be greatly in error, were checked as rapidly as possible. Crippled as he was Peary was the expedition's leader and proved it by every clear-cut detail of his administration.

The first Eskimos arrived before the end of August, a man and his wife with their two children. They were just as naïve as Kane had painted them, but Peary was prepared. Ikwa, the man, made signs to Peary that he admired the white man's wife. As the hint failed of its purpose, he openly advocated some sort of deal whereby each could enjoy the other's woman. Peary merely smiled, and treated the suggestion as a compliment. But he also sat down and with quiet patience explained some of the white man's customs that differ from the native's. Ikwa understood finally, and later passed the word

along to his tribesmen. Mrs. Peary in the course of three expeditions was never once annoyed.

The Eskimos stayed. Later others came. Peary organized them into hunting parties. The first walrus weighed nearly 2000 lbs. This meant that dogs could be supported. So he began to buy dogs. He set his prices low; a few needles, a knife, matches, and so on. But he was meticulous in the ratio of the value of what he gave to what he received. Eskimo seamstresses were found willing to make Eskimo clothing for his men. Eskimo drivers were found who enjoyed teaching Peary and Astrup to handle a dog team.

On October 18th, the sun was seen for the last time and the tiny camp settled down for its first polar night. By November 7th, seventeen Eskimos had joined the expedition. Peary had them build a large extra snow igloo so that newcomers would find shelter at once. He provided hot tea and boiled meat for hunting parties. Naturally the word went down the coast that this white man was not like former ones. More Eskimos came, meaning more seamstresses and more hunters and drivers.

The Arctic began to make itself felt. Three blizzards in rapid succession hurled themselves down from the Ice-Cap upon the small house, which quivered under the impact. Darkness increased daily until there were only a few hours of faint twilight at midday. The dogs began to die of *piblockto*, the dread Greenland animal disease. Nothing seemed able to save them. Some of the provisions

that had been brought north in the ship were found to have spoiled. The oil supply turned out to be not quite so plentiful as was supposed. The natives were loud in their warnings against travel on the Ice-Cap.

These, and a score of other discouragements, accumulated to impair the leader's confidence in his plan of action.

He began his ethnological work. The Eskimos, who up to this time had approved of practically everything the tall white man did, now balked. "He's an *Angekok* (devil) after all!" they whispered among themselves. Some left in great trepidation. They could not understand why Peary should want their pictures with most of their clothing off. When he explained that learned men in the south wished to compare the native's body with bodies of other races they retorted that they believed he wanted the information *so he could make more Eskimos!*

On February 13th with the returning light Peary sent out his first party to the Ice-Cap to take up supplies and prepare an igloo for a future base. The men returned severely frosted and reported that their efforts to build a snow house had not been successful. Next day Peary, Astrup and the Doctor faced a bitter wind and followed the trail of the others, continuing up on the Inland Ice. Then began one of those extraordinary storms which travelers in the North fear most of all. The sun had not yet returned, and the normal temperature was in the forties and fifties below zero. Suddenly the wind swung into the south and increased. The

sky became leaden. The station thermometer rose from 42° below zero to 41° above zero and rain came down in torrents. The three men on the Ice-Cap were huddled in their sleeping bags behind their poorly made snow walls. Drifting snow began to cut the walls away. Astrup became so weighted down that he could not move. All were in their underwear and could not, or dared not, emerge into the blizzard long enough to get their warm clothes on. There was no food except a little frozen pemmican. On the third day the wind abated and the party escaped down to Red Cliff House. All felt in their hearts the seriousness of the tremendous task that Peary had set himself.

It was in this early springtime with the fearful cold and winds, the vague doubts and anxieties, that the never-flagging helpfulness of the wife came in. Mrs. Peary was by nature the sanguine sort. She could swallow her share of hardship in a fashion of which the men were incapable. A sort of miracle it was, as all later agreed. For while the men took their medicine unflinchingly, their reaction to trials was always a perceptible tautening of lips, sombre eyes, and long lapses into silence. Josephine Peary, on the other hand, was curiously apathetic when it came to lack of luxury, to cold, poor food, and cramped quarters. Her dimples twinkled and her blithe laughter broke out in the darkest moments. For the grim-faced weather-beaten husband, who still hobbled noticeably, her stimulating presence was as indispensable as the blood and sinews of his own body.

During the entire winter Peary studied and experimented upon his equipment for the long march. "As regarded conditions," he noted, "I was in the dark: as to the probable altitude to be reached, there was nothing to guide me. It might be 6000 feet; it might be 15,000." The distance he roughly figured at 1000 miles across and back. There was no assurance it would not be 2000. He might meet wild animals, strange tribes. The Eskimos had reported a fall of ash on the Greenland coast. This could mean a volcano in the interior.

All was ready the last day in April. Four white men and Henson started. The climb with dogs and sledges to the summit of the cliffs above the house was, so to speak, the opening gun of the main campaign. For it must not be forgotten that Peary's great enterprise was the exploration of the interior, and the determination of whether or not it provided an "imperial highway to the Pole."

The first slopes were very steep. And there was the usual storm that met the party whenever they ventured on the sacred precincts of the Inland Ice. This was a very critical period for Peary. His men were considerably less experienced even than he, and they had not his immense incentive. Between two adjacent camps he worked back and forth, striving to advance his pitifully small belongings an appreciable distance forward. Only the storm called a halt in his almost superhuman efforts. "Tired in every muscle," his diary reads, "and with no sleep for sixty-four hours, I think I must have fallen

asleep the moment I tumbled into the snow igloo." Then came the rush of wind, the familiar hiss of snow. And for twenty-four hours it looked dark for the venture.

"When I could stand it no longer, Gibson and myself started for the upper igloo." There he found the remaining members of his party so snowed in that they could not extricate themselves from their bags. They were very cold. The handful of dogs were in a frightful tangle. One died in convulsions.

All this herculean labor told on Peary's broken leg. It began to swell and the pain of it was a torment. When the storm abated the somewhat chastened little party pushed on a few short marches. Peary soon saw that his original plan of taking but one or two companions was his only hope of getting across. "I told them that to many it would seem a dangerous, perhaps foolish thing for two men to strike out into these unknown regions, depending only on their own resources and health for a safe return."

All four men volunteered to go with Peary. He thanked them and chose the young Norwegian, Eivind Astrup of Christiania, a noted ski-runner and a tower of physical strength. Separation was swift, and the two went forward.

Then came the long nightmare of the first crossing of North Greenland: two men and sixteen dogs alone in a white desert, 6000 feet in the air, and the only living things in that vast dead space. Some days when the weather was clear the sun made trouble.

"The pungent quality of its blinding glare is such that the strongest eye can endure it unaided only for a few hours. A man placed in the center of the Inland Ice in mid-summer, with no means of protecting his eyes, would be as completely helpless at the end of the day as a blind kitten. The traveler upon the Inland Ice must keep his eyes constantly protected by goggles of heavy smoked glass, and sleep with a strip of heavy fur tied across them."

Other days brought a different sort of grief. Says the inimitable diary of that historic march:

"In clear weather the traveler upon this white waste sees but the snow, the sky, the sun. In cloudy weather, even these disappear. Many a time I have found myself in such weather traveling in grey space, feeling the snow beneath my snow-shoes, but unable to see it. No sun, no sky, no horizon—absolutely nothing that the eye could rest upon. Zenith and nadir alike, an intangible grey nothingness. My feet and snowshoes were sharp and clear as silhouettes, and I was sensible of contact with the snow at every step. Yet as far as my eyes gave me evidence to the contrary, I was walking upon nothing. The strain, both physical and mental, of this blindness with wide open eyes was such that after a time I would be obliged to stop until the passing of the fog, or formation of higher clouds, gave me something to keep the course by."

The writer can add from his own personal experience on the Ice-Cap that the physical strain of such conditions cannot be overrated. Having nothing to

judge step-distance by, and the slight inequalities of surface being absolutely invisible under such conditions, the leg and trunk muscles soon ache with the unconscious effort continually being made just to keep one's balance. As a result, when the eye can once more rest upon land, great masses of dark rocks and high cliffs, there is an exquisite sense of relief while the vision fairly *caresses* the objects it has again hungrily to embrace.

The day's march over, the dogs were fed their morsels of pemmican; the two men boiled two quarts of tea and munched their pemmican with a ration of four ship's biscuit. Preparation for the night was simple in the extreme. After food, faces were rubbed with vaseline to ease the intense burning of the sun and wind. A drop of opium solution was put in each eye to relieve the pain of the blinding snow glare. A strap of fur was tied over both eyes. Then the two lay down; alternately one slept inside the little canvas wind-shelter, the other outside to settle the fighting dogs from time to time.

On the 26th of June, nearly two months after leaving, Peary's first great Arctic exploit was consummated: he set human eyes for the first time on the unknown land that lies beyond the northernmost limits of the Ice-Cap. It was a glorious day full of sunshine. This bright weather held while the nearly exhausted men crawled down from their icy plateau and on July 1st emerged on to the land itself. As they neared it, "we could plainly see the green rivers and lakes along the margin of the ice, and the mur-

mur of roaring cataracts came softly to our ears. . . . The dogs were wild with delight, and expressed their emotions most vociferously."

It was a supreme moment in the man's life. But we must not forget another aspect of it: so rapidly shrinking is this little globe of ours, between radio and aviation, that but a man or two more shall ever know the ecstasy of looking first on land untrod by human foot, unseen by human eye. Robert Peary was one of the final few fortunates.

Indeed, the very day this paragraph is being written Byrd and MacMillan are covering in two hours by their planes a traverse just to the west of Peary's Ice-Cap march that MacMillan and the writer took over three weeks to struggle across by sledge, but a decade ago.

The new land was a little disappointing in that it was no Garden of Eden. "A region of such utter barrenness I never saw before. After ten hours marching we halted for a rest between a mound of boulders and a snow-drift, and throwing up a wind-break of boulders turned in to sleep."

A great anxiety here assailed Peary. He had crossed Greenland. He had reached a new land. He had proved that the Inland Ice ended here just above the 81st parallel of latitude. But he as yet had no means of determining how far the mainland continued toward the north. And since knowledge of the insularity of Greenland was one of his great desiderata he felt baffled here at the very moment of triumph. North as far as he could see spread a

series of high rolling eminences, which in some places could be dignified by the name of mountains.

Moreover, a curious and unlooked-for obstacle to further progress threatened the very lives of the party. The dogs began to show every evidence of sun-stroke. They had descended from temperatures below zero on the Ice-Cap, from biting cold and blizzards, into calm and blazing sunshine. In one spot the temperature now rose as high as 71°!

There were other serious difficulties. Rations had become dangerously low. Early marches shortened by storms had consumed more than their prorated amount of food. Footgear was another cause of anxiety. Sharp rocks had worn through nearly every boot in the bags. The heat had begun to tell on both men. Astrup, strong as he was, showed signs of illness. Peary's own ardor was dampened by the reaction from the long trip over.

Thus, as so many times happened later, Peary found himself with the prize literally within his grasp yet every conceivable circumstance combining to wrest it from his rapidly weakening fingers. He was living one of the many dark days of his life. The lamp of his Inspiration had momentarily dimmed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HERO OF THE HOUR

LUCK changed abruptly. In fact from this moment we deal with the period of greatest felicity in Peary's life of many tragedies.

His little party of two men and a dog team had reached the new land at the northeast corner of Greenland. All were half-starved, footsore and weary. Rations were dangerously short. It was much of a gamble as to whether the daring pair would ever reach the base at Red Cliff House again. But Peary persisted onward across the rolling rocky barren land, determined to bring back with him the full secret of its northern limit. He risked everything on the chance of finding game.

Runs his diary:

"At last, however, as we were slowly and painfully creeping down the slope of an ancient moraine, two black objects were spied across the valley. There could be no doubt this time. They were musk-oxen. And I stopped to pet Pau's head (the king dog) and speak a word of encouragement to the noble animal, for I knew fresh meat would restore the brilliancy to his dull eyes and save his life."

And also save the two white men's lives, he should have added.

All the primitive instincts of the hungry man came to the fore. The dogs were quickly tethered. Astrup stayed to keep them quiet with his whip. Peary crept on toward the prey. Within close range he took long aim and fired at the nearest bull. Savage in his need for food he rose and ran forward, a risky act before a wounded musk-ox. But necessity knows no fear. The musk-ox scrambled to its feet, whirled and came for him. Peary had never seen one before. He shot again point-blank, dropping the animal this time. A final shot rolled the other one over. Fifteen minutes later Astrup and the dogs were up. For two days the party slept and fed their famished bodies.

With renewed strength a final march was made that brought them out to the end of the land strip on which they traveled, a "giant iron wall that dropped 3800 feet to the level of the bay below us." This cliff Peary called "Navy Cliff."

"We stood," he wrote that happy night, "upon the northeast coast of Greenland; and looking far off over the surface of a mighty glacier on our right and through the broad mouth of the bay, we saw stretching away to the horizon the great ice-fields of the Arctic Ocean."

North Greenland had been crossed. The land that lay about was virgin land, so far as human knowledge went. Years later Mylius Erichsen and

Musk-Oxen at Bay.

A herd of fifty animals forms a hollow square containing cows and calves.

his ill-fated party recovered the record Peary left on Navy Cliff. Erichsen and his men all died of cold and starvation. The body of only one was found. He had struggled onward with the records, among which was the bit of paper on which Peary had written under date of July 4, 1892:

"Have this day, with one companion, Eivind Astrup, and eight dogs reached this point, via the Inland Ice, from McCormick Bay, Whale Sound. We have traveled over five hundred miles; and Astrup, myself, and the dogs are in best condition. I have named this fiord 'Independence' in honor of that day, July 4th, dear to all Americans, on which we looked down into it. Have killed five musk-oxen in the valley above, and have seen several others. I start back for Whale Sound tomorrow."

The journey home was without important incident. One storm kept the pair imprisoned for 60 hours. Heavy fogs blinded them at times. Three dogs died of exhaustion. On August 3rd, a month after the homeward journey began, the familiar land of the Whale Sound region was sighted. Next morning came a dramatic meeting. Black dots appeared on the white horizon ahead. These dots soon resolved themselves into human beings; and half an hour later Peary shook the hand of Professor Heilprin who had come up with his party from the ship just arrived. Both parties started immediately for the base.

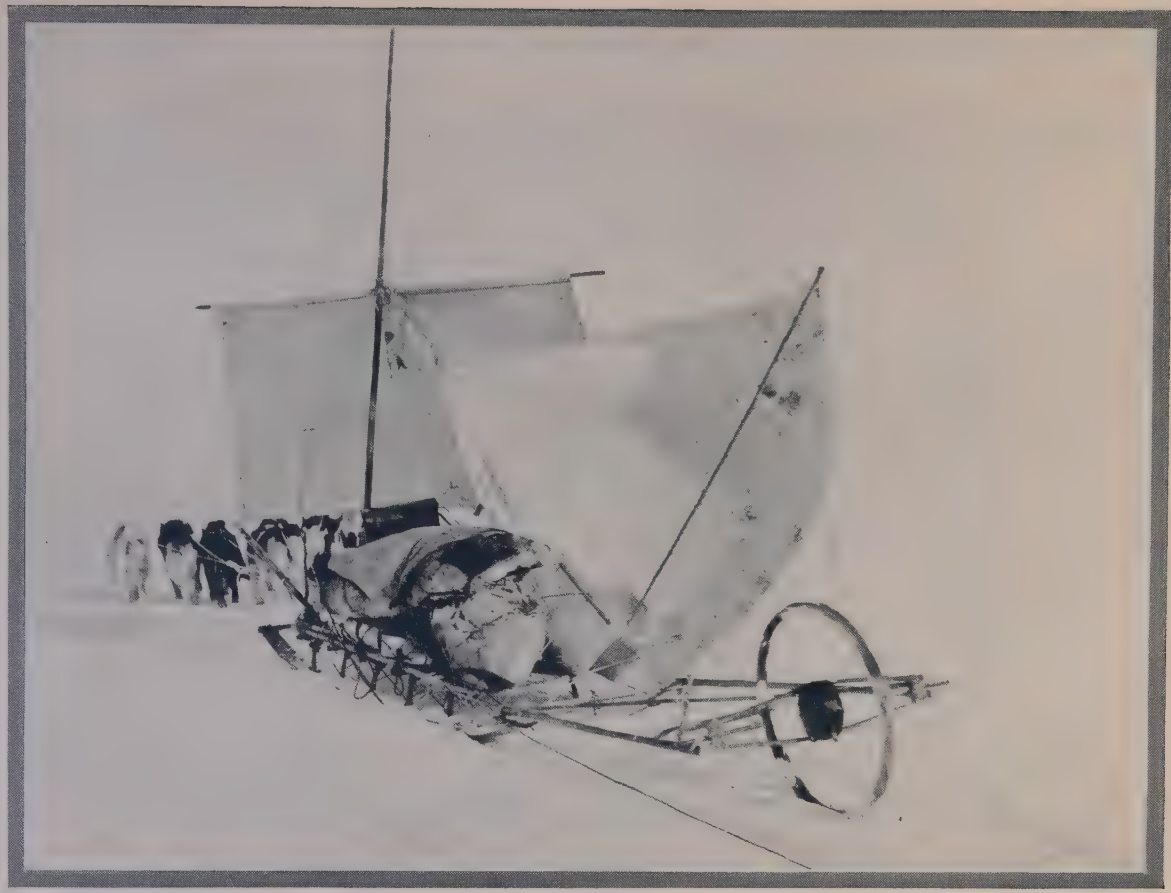
Peary's eagerness after 100 days in the field without a bath or change of clothing, always under heavy physical strain, may well be imagined.

"About two o'clock in the morning," he wrote, "I stood again on the crest of the bluff up which I had backed my sledges more than three months before, and looked down upon the green, iceberg dotted waters of McCormick Bay, with the little *Kite* floating snugly at anchor at my feet. Never did fairer summer vision greet human eyes. An hour later and I stepped aboard the *Kite*. My wife's glad cry of welcome sounded in my ears. The long White March had ended."

But a longer march—the "Black March" Peary called it once—awaited him at home: his long, hard lecture tour.

The sea journey south was devoid of special interest. It commenced with a tragedy when Verhoeff, the expedition's meteorologist, tried contrary to orders to cross one of the glaciers in Robertson Bay just before the ship got underway, and was never seen again. A week's search failed to reveal any traces of the missing man. Peary felt this loss keenly, as he had justly boasted of the lack of suffering or injury that had characterized his expedition in contrast to the dire happenings on others. Provisions for a year were, however, cached where the missing man could find them in case he returned.

Peary reached New York to find himself the hero of the hour. He had left the East River a little more than a year before, a youthfully enthusiastic believer in a unique idea. Some people had derided his project and questioned his sanity; most people did not even know that he had gone. Now that he had



On the Greenland Ice-Cap.

Sails were often used to help the weak dogs. Odometer shown at rear.

come back successful, popular applause was tremendous.

But a new Peary had returned. The fanaticism of youth had been tempered by the fierce northern gales; his sublime faith in a purpose had been succeeded by a sounder faith in the mechanism behind the purpose. The flame of his inspiration burned as bright as ever, but it burned now with a clearer light.

It was both the public and the scientific verdict that a brilliant feat had been accomplished. Perhaps some of the public plaudits were the reaction in finding that one man could lead an expedition to the North and return without a long yarn of anguish. And when to this bright side of his story was added a piece of real achievement, the American spirit of sportsmanship figuratively rose and cheered the performer.

He was soon approached by Major James B. Pond, probably the greatest lecture impresario of all times. Major Pond took a great fancy to the young explorer, and the feeling soon grew to be mutual. So close did the two men ultimately become that Peary in later years had the other handle most of his personal affairs in New York. A lecture proposition was now broached which promised substantial funds for another expedition. Peary had no capital of his own, and at this moment owed several embarrassing bills in connection with the previous voyage north. Also he would have to secure a special furlough from Washington.

His first move was a secret conference with Dr. Nolan, Secretary of the Philadelphia Academy

of Sciences. He outlined his plan for a more extended exploration of northern Greenland. "See General Wistar, President of the Academy," was all that the worthy Doctor would commit himself to.

Meanwhile Peary had been forced to proceed with his official naval reports and listen to the Navy Department's plans for his future duty. His interview with his superior in his own corps ran as follows:

"We all think you did very well, Peary."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

"And the Secretary joins us in congratulating you on getting back safely."

"Thank you, sir."

"Only don't be a fool, Mr. Peary, and think of trying it again. You are lucky to come through it once. But next time you'd probably be frozen to death the way the rest of them are. Now where would you like duty?"

"In North Greenland, sir."

The senior sprang to his feet and slammed a clenched fist so hard to the desk that the inkwell capsized.

"North Greenland be damned. You're back in the Navy now, and you're going to do your duty while you are here!"

Peary made haste to see General Wistar who, he believed, not only perceived the abstract scientific value in successful Arctic work, but was subject to no narrow professional doctrines.

His approach to the General was laconic:

"I have proved that I can carry out an Arctic expedition without great expense and achieve substantial results without undue risk. With two Ice-Cap trips behind me I can surely make a third of even greater length and with a larger party. If the new land I have discovered continues a long way towards the Pole, as well it may, I can probably reach the Pole in the same season. The Northeast coast of Greenland will be covered by my southern party. Scientific study of the vast area I have tapped will be relatively easy."

General Wistar asked a few questions about equipment and probable cost which were easily answered. He was especially interested in the likelihood that Greenland might continue far north. He studied the photographs taken and inquired specifically as to the topography of the new land. He ventured the opinion that from glacial aspects of the terrain it might be possible to deduce the past history of it as well as to make some sort of prognosis as to conditions that might be met further north. Then he said:

"Peary, I believe you should have the opportunity to carry out your project. On the understanding that the Academy will not be called upon for any money, its endowment not being lawfully available for this purpose, and will not be responsible for the risks to yourself and companions, I will use my best efforts to obtain your leave."

The younger man wrote later: "With this powerful influence in my favor I felt the thing already done." He didn't add that he had no money and

no immediate prospect of getting any unless he could make a lecture tour. Nor that securing civilian assistance to help him get leave from the Navy was like putting his head in a noose.

Only it so happened that Peary by this time had become something of a naval strategist himself. And before the sluggish Bureau machinery, of which he was alleged to be a rusty cog, had a chance to get in motion his friend General Wistar had laid the whole project before the Secretary of the Navy, B. F. Tracy, so convincingly that there was little doubt of high political approval. A secondary offense on Mr. Tracy came from Dr. Chapman and Dr. Dixon, prominent scientists whom Peary had won over just prior to this crisis in his affairs. The outcome of the whole situation was that Lieutenant Peary was granted three years' leave of absence with the approval of the President of the United States at the very moment when the full weight of his Navy Department Bureau's condemnation had been launched against further official countenance of his aspirations.

Peary came out winner. But Bureaus have long memories. He was yet to feel the acid bitterness of the resentment his bold assault had aroused in November, 1892.

He was now a penniless young naval officer with a big idea and a national reputation who had maneuvered three years' furlough out of a hidebound military organization. Also he was secretly a little fagged by the strain.

But he had no time to waste. He must get away by summer or the edge of his advantage would have been dulled. He had six months in which to raise at least $80,000, secure a ship, organize personnel, collect equipment, and accomplish the multitude of other details involved in preparing such an expedition for the North.

He grabbed the first train for New York and took a hansom cab to the office of Major Pond. "I have six months in which to accomplish everything," he told the impresario. "I need money most of all. I can travel until May first if you can send me out at once. By that date I must be in Philadelphia collecting my men and supplies."

"But, my dear Lieutenant," protested the Major, wringing his large hands, "a lecture tour takes much preparation. At the time I approached you in the fall there were still some open dates. I could make you an offer then. Now, while I haven't the slightest doubt of your ability, I cannot be so sure."

But Peary saw one mission in his visit: that was enough money to get him away in June. With fire in his eye and velvet persuasion in his voice (so the Major recorded) he insisted upon a lecture tour that would begin within a few weeks at the very most and would net him a staggering sum of money.

The Major succumbed. This was the first week in December. Telegraph wires began burning out inquiries that very night. Advance publicity went to the printer by messenger before noon the following day. Peary's own meteoric enthusiasm seemed

to inspire his lecture manager. More effective lecture advertising had never been produced than that which was shot out by the Pond Bureau in the week that followed. As a result of this unprecedented rush Peary was on the road right after New Year's day. His tour was a success from his very first appearance on the stage. He delivered 168 lectures in 96 days. The tour grossed nearly $20,000, of which Peary received about $13,000.

"Was he satisfied?" snorted the good-humored Major in later days. "Did he rejoice in having pulled off one of the greatest lecture tours America had ever seen? Not that lad. He wanted $80,000 for his voyage, and he was too hot on the scent of it to worry about how fine a lecturer he was!"

Major Pond did finally several years afterward worm out of Peary the confession that the 1893 lecture tour was something of a feat.

The Peary performance would have done justice to Barnum himself. In the first place Peary had begun in self-defense after the 1886 trip to accumulate some of the qualities of a first-class showman. So when he returned in the summer of 1892 he brought with him a collection of stage properties that would enable the public to visualize more clearly just what northern life was like. This was in marked contrast to his predecessors whose sole evidence of Arctic curiosities was in the shape of woeful stories and exaggerated drawings. Peary brought a full outfit of fur clothing such as he wore on his classic journey across Greenland. He appeared

on the stage in this suit at the Academy of Sciences in Philadelphia much to the delight of his audience. For a frame he had rigged a sort of Eskimo encampment. He had five real Eskimo dogs along, under charge of the faithful Henson. These were from the same team that had survived the hard trip home from Navy Cliff. Besides the dogs were sledges, furs, skins, whips, native cooking utensils, pemmican tins, snowshoes and skis, harpoons and killing irons. With this setting he then showed some of the finest northern views that have ever been cast by a stereoptican, if we are to believe surviving members of his audience.

He was still not an orator in any sense of the word. But by this time he had emerged from his boyhood reticence, driven therefrom by the baffling lack of sympathy he had been meeting since Nansen had preceded him across South Greenland. He had by dogged courage and impeccable logic wrung from important men the support he had to have. And the winning of it had developed in him a clear-cut, forceful delivery, an ability to "think on his feet," and a sense of the dramatic without which no human appeal can stir its hearers. So that now that he was home with success, standing before sympathetic listeners, he readily fell into an easy exposition and lucid narrative that won him applause all over the United States.

Major Pond was too shrewd a showman himself to miss any of the possibilities in the young explorer's "rig" as he called it. And while Peary drew the line

at giving two-hour talks in hot halls with all his furs on, he did consent to take Matt Henson, the dogs and much of the other paraphernalia with him on his swing around the circuit.

As might be anticipated, there was much in the way of comic complications while making one-night stands with a full-blooded North Greenland dog team in charge of an African trainer, even though the latter had learned to handle a whip in the dogs' native land. Several times just when Matt would get his team down to the station in plenty of time for the train a wandering cat would appear and with a howl the team would plunge after it. No man living is strong enough to hold an Eskimo dog team. Matt's only hope lay in his long-lashed whip which he used to hurl out over the heads of his mad animals while shouting loud native imprecations much to the delight of the crowd that always quickly gathered. Several times the police had to take a hand; and twice at least there was a full sized riot. All of this excitement brought notoriety to the team and its master, and much valuable advertising to Peary's lecture tour.

The dogs behaved astonishingly well at the lectures. They seemed to like the show. Their place was on the platform lying near the feet of the speaker. For about an hour they would stretch out, contentedly dozing while the story of their exploits was being told. But if by any chance Peary prolonged his talk they soon became restless. The King Dog invariably rose at such times, stretched and gave vent to a loud

half-growled bay that would divert the audience's attention sufficiently to bring the lecture to an abrupt end. The other dogs soon learned the trick; and for several weeks it looked as if the team ran that part of the lecture almost more than Peary. The minute the lights were turned up many of the audience would come forward and look at the big animals. At first these contacts were a little strained. But the dogs soon found that no harm was ever met, and got to look forward to their share of public admiration. Major Pond's report indicates that in the whole journey there was never a disagreeable incident of any sort connected with the dogs' behavior at such times.

It is inconceivable from this distance to see how Peary ever accomplished all he did. Not only was he engaged in one of the most strenuous lecture tours ever attempted, but he was organizing a large expedition to the north that would leave within a few weeks of his return to the east. Despite this Major Pond wrote:

"I never heard Peary complain, or speak an unkind word to his employees or dogs. He was a wonderful worker. Stenographer and typewriter accompanied him, and he carried on a mammoth correspondence."

Yet in all this turmoil he made but one serious error, if it can be termed so. He phrased it:

"Carried away by enthusiasm, and with no time in the rapid whirl of effort for a calm consideration of

the matter, I made the fatal mistake of taking, contrary to my expressed theory, a large party. I found, when too late, that I had very little suitable timber for Arctic work in it."

Besides the handicap of great speed and the tremendous burden of extra work for the summer, the bitter winter of 1893 brought a deal of Arctic hardship with it. For example, on the visit to St. Paul, Peary's train was stuck in a snowdrift outside the city. Refusing to miss the appointment, he energetically got a detached engine to take him and his party in just in time to reach the hall that same night. It was here that an old gentleman turned to Mrs. Peary, who happened to be sitting in the audience, and proffered his opera glasses during the slides with the remark: "Don't you want to have a look at the wife's face? She's the one I'm interested in. *Think of a woman going up there!*"

Peary reached New York in April pretty well fagged out. To his dismay the silver panic had materialized and the funds he had counted on from several individuals and societies were not forthcoming. Yet he had already chartered his ship, ordered his equipment and supplies, and enlisted his party. Money, as usual, became the instant and crying need.

"At this crisis," he said, "a friend suggested putting my ship on exhibition, and raising the balance needed in this manner. The idea was extremely distasteful to me, but there was no other alternative.

So the people of Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Portland were given an opportunity to visit the ship on the payment of a nominal admission. As a result the quarters of the people made up the needed balance."

CHAPTER IX

DISASTER

FATE'S seemingly keen sense of the dramatic well justifies personifying that vague factor in men's lives.

Only an ironic Fate could have devised so jubilant a send-off as Peary got in 1893 at the Philadelphia docks when his embarking expedition was doomed to so disastrous an outcome. Seven weeks prior to the *Falcon's* sailing he had completed his triumphal lecture tour through the United States. His polar plans had been published and broadly discussed throughout the civilized world. Practically every important scientific society in America had directly or indirectly contributed to his success. The public had come forward with their money at the last minute. Friends congratulated one another on acquaintanceship with the hero of the enterprise. Close to 2,000 applications had come from promising young scientists for membership in the expedition's staff. And all of these details impressed themselves profoundly upon the heart of the son of Mary Peary, the serious-minded lad of high ideals who took responsibility with incredible earnestness. " 'Twould have been

far better had I been born with a thicker hide," he later said.

The actual number of business items to which the Leader had to attend at the time was overwhelming. However, his lecture tour had removed for the time being the bulk of his financial anxiety. And he had been able to charter a larger and faster ship, the *Falcon*, out of St. John's, Newfoundland. His renewed credit allowed him to purchase adequate supplies of pemmican, dry staples, and other supplies. He had laid in a large stock of knives, cooking utensils, tools, undergarments, sweets, toys, needles and other trade material for employing the Eskimos that had been so useful on the last voyage. He had scrutinized as many of the army of importunate young men who wished to go with him as his very limited time permitted, and had chosen eight who looked promising. He had canvassed Philadelphia for a nurse who could be depended on to help Mrs. Peary through the hard days ahead and act as cook for the expedition when services as nurse were not required; and, moreover, one who would also survive the rigors and the depressing effect of the long winter night. He had negotiated with publishers and press agents, with editors and promoters, with cranks and pseudo-scientists, with religious bodies, with mining and oil magnates, with all manner of strange individuals who always crop up to harass a man who is setting forth in the limelight of public notice to visit some little known portion of the globe.

The strain of these days was terrific. In the fall

had been fought the long dragging struggle with the Navy. Through the winter and spring had come the unbroken burden of lectures day and night. And now rose this final tumult of preparation in which there were none save his wife and Matt Henson to help: the one half-ill, the other obviously inadequate. Yet by midnight, June 26, 1893, the *Falcon* cast off and dropped down the Delaware River with the ebb tide to set course for New York, then Boston and Portland.

The ship bore a strange cargo when she left Sydney, N.S., her last port, a little later. She carried a deck-load of coal. A group of unhappy western burros from Santa Fé were in stalls between decks. Her hold was crammed with a miscellaneous cargo of foodstuffs and trading material. Two of those aboard her were women: a prospective mother and Susan Cross, the daring little Scotch nurse who had volunteered at $20 a month to take the unique task of looking out for the first white baby to be born in the Far North. Cheers and a great waving of handkerchiefs ushered the tiny ship from her Boston dock, just two berths away from the pier which Elisha Kent Kane had left on his famous expedition a generation before.

As the *Falcon* lumbered on up the coast newspapers all over the world reviewed Peary's plans:

"He will base among his Eskimos in the Whale Sound district at the same point he used on his last expedition. This fall he will send out advance

parties to lay a large cache of provisions far inland on the summit of the Ice-Cap. This will enable him to get away early in the spring of 1894. He will take seven men besides himself. When this party reaches Independence Bay, which he discovered last year, it will separate into four small groups. One of these groups will continue on the land to the northward and reach the Pole, if possible. After Lieutenant Peary's last splendid exploit we anticipate that he will have no great trouble in carrying out the contemplated campaign."

That is the greatest handicap any explorer can have: that the public at large "anticipates no trouble."

The upward voyage was not devoid of interest. As usual, gales were met off the Labrador. Two of the burros died and their meat was fed to the Eskimo dogs which had been across the continent on the spring lecture tour. Peary's favorite team leader was washed overboard just above Cape Farewell.

Stops were made at various places to secure equipment that was not available at home. Boots and skins were bought from the Moravian mission in Labrador. Dogs were secured in the several Danish settlements of South Greenland. Fur clothing and 20 dogs which had been purchased through Copenhagen were picked up at Godhavn. All these items again confirm the never-ending labor of the leader of such an expedition who later will be blamed intolerantly by those with him and those at home if he has forgotten so much as a single article that might have

added to the comfort or the safety of his men. And the great unfairness of it is that there is no standard or set of rules by which he can regulate his list of essentials. He must depend only upon his experience and his common sense.

At Godhavn Peary had arranged a little surprise party for the Governor and Mrs. Anderson, both of whom had befriended him when he arrived before, a penniless though eager young enthusiast. From the *Falcon* were brought ashore a case of oranges, one of lemons, pineapples, watermelons, and other southern dainties. "Never shall I forget the expression on the good woman's face," wrote an eyewitness, "and the way her eyes filled with tears as she entered the room, now redolent with the perfumes of the tropics, and saw the table loaded down with fruits which she had not seen for years and years." The Leader still had time, despite his numberless problems, to remember those who had helped him.

His first question on arrival at Cape York was: "Have you seen Verhoeff?"

"We found his footprints further on the Great Ice," replied Myouk. "It is clear that the Almighty Devil has taken your man, as he will take others who dare to go up into the high places." Myouk, like the other natives who had grown to like Peary, lost no opportunity to warn him against further trips on the dreaded Inland Ice.

The *Falcon* reached Bowdoin Bay on the north side of Inglefield Gulf early in August. A site for the new house was chosen not many miles from the little

shack that had been the lodging of the party of the previous year. Larger quarters were required this time. And there were improvements in the way of a southern exposure and a good fresh water stream nearby, as well as the proximity of an Eskimo village.

Another important departure that had a great bearing on the work of future years was the use of the expedition's ship to hunt walrus for the natives and for the dogs and men that were to make up Peary's settlement. When the Eskimos saw that the white man truly understood their most important problem of life they began to feel that ultimate confidence in Peary which sustained them through the two daring trips out over the Polar Sea in 1906 and 1909.

The *Falcon* set off south on August 20, 1893. She left in the north the following: S. J. Entrekin, Peary's first assistant; Eivind Astrup, hero of the last expedition, second assistant; E. E. Vincent, the Surgeon of the party; G. H. Clark, taxidermist; Hugh J. Lee; George H. Carr; James Davidson; Walter F. Swain; F. A. Stokes; and Matthew Henson, Peary's colored servant. Mrs. Peary and her nurse, Mrs. Susan Cross, made up the final members of the expedition. Besides, there were already about 20 natives encamped in the neighborhood; and 85 screaming, ravenous dogs that had been collected along the coast.

Astrup had crossed North Greenland with Peary in 1892. He was now selected for his ability and experience to take charge of the fall work of laying out provisions on the Ice-Cap for the use of the spring party. He set off with three white men and 50 dogs

on August 29th. All were in high hopes and enthusiastic. Peary himself had at last begun to recover from the strain of almost a year of unremitting labor and nervous strain. "Not for months had I been so sanguine of success!" he exclaimed later. His one great care at the moment was for his Josephine then approaching the Valley of the Shadow by the route mere man can never know.

On September 12th, Marie Ahnighito Peary, the "Snow Baby," was born. Both mother and child came through the ordeal safely, despite the pathetically limited facilities available for handling such a serious event. Incidentally, the date was the anniversary of the writing of the "Star Spangled Banner." The Eskimos had never seen a child so white. Entire families journeyed from far-away Cape York to the south, and from distant Etah to the north, to satisfy themselves by actual touch that she was really a creature of warm flesh and blood, and not of snow as they at first believed.

At this point troubles began suddenly to come thick and fast. On September 13th came news from the Ice-Cap of Astrup's complete physical breakdown. His robust health of the year before had disappeared, and with it most of his youthful zest in ice-cap sledging. This was a blow to Peary of almost irreparable severity. To have a right-hand man of experience in work so unusual as this was had meant much to the Leader. Now to count out the one man available just when he was most needed was a staggering loss.

Marie Ahnighito Peary.

In native costume after her birth in North Greenland.

It was soon learned that the sledge loads had been taken less than twenty miles from headquarters when storms had set in with wind and snow. Two of the white men had lost their way, and nearly their lives. Astrup was brought back helpless. Lee remained alone and storm-bound in a tent up on the ice for a week.

At this point Peary himself jumped in and took charge. He felt his wife and baby were doing well and that the whole safety of his plans lay in prompt execution of those for food caches up on the ice. Indeed, if the spring party had to carry full loads from the house it was almost an assured fact that the goal would never be reached.

Peary found that only a fraction of his misfortunes had been reported. Carr had sprained his back. Two of the sledges had blown away during the storm. One other had been crushed among the rough ice. Lee's feet were frostbitten. And Astrup seemed to be out of the running for months, if not for good.

An even greater disaster was in store for the sore-tried Leader. He hastened to the edge of the Inland Ice and managed to collect the dogs and enough equipment to continue with the loads about 30 miles onward. He double-banked and made another 15 miles. But wind came and beset him with two men at the edge of the land. During his wait he sent Lee to headquarters for fresh dogs. In twelve hours Lee returned without the dogs but with a note from Mrs. Peary.

"What is it? Tell me quick, Lee!" almost shouted

Peary as he laid a heavy hand on his assistant's shoulder. Such emotion was foreign to his taciturn nature. But thoughts of his weakened wife and the tiny infant back in the storm-buffeted shack were never far from his mind.

"A tidal wave—at least, that is what we called it, sir!" exclaimed Lee in distress. In rapid phrases he described a catastrophe without parallel in the annals of Arctic exploration.

He had arrived at the Lodge where he was to spend the night and bring up fresh dogs in the morning. He had reached the front door and had just removed his snow-packed caribou-skin shirt before entering. Suddenly a great roaring noise smote upon his ears. He glanced up. The brisk cold wind still swept with an eerie note down from the Inland Ice. Highlands across the frozen fiord lay white with snow save where their sombre shoulders of dark-red granite thrust straight upward from the talus. The tumult increased as Lee's frightened eye ran over the bleak landscape for explanation. He darted a look toward the inner reaches of the inlet, up towards the massive blue-white glacier that flowed back in a viscous mass into the deep-blue sky eastward. Then, to his astonishment, he saw a huge commotion at the base of this glacier: masses of black water and splinters of fractured ice were being flung into the air as if by some subterranean explosion. But he was even more startled when he saw advancing toward him across the congealed surface of the fiord a great curving wave of ice. The wave came with the speed of an

express train. Wonderful to relate, it did not crack until it came to the rocks at the very feet of the spell-bound man. There it broke, and with it the huge mass of water underneath. Lee sprang to safety and saved himself with only a ducking. But the massive casks of precious oil, the launch and the two priceless whaleboats, all stowed so carefully high above the tide-line, were helpless in the icy maelstrom that overwhelmed them.

"It was the whole face of the Bowdoin Glacier that came off, sir!" concluded Lee. "And since practically all of the fuel oil was either dashed out over the rocks or afloat, I realized at once that your whole plan of campaign might have to be changed. Mrs. Peary agreed with me and dashed off this note."

"It means that we'll have to abandon our electric light plant at any rate," returned the Leader grimly, tearing open the envelope in his hand. He read the note twice, lingering over the lines of sympathy and encouragement at the end. Then with a look of new courage on his face he glanced up and said slowly:

"It doesn't look hopeless. Eat your breakfast, boys, and come down to the house. The fates and all hell are against me: *But I'll conquer yet!*"

Peary ate no breakfast that morning. Once more he faced complete defeat. Without fuel oil for the camp stoves an inland trip would be an absolute impossibility.

For twenty-four hours the members of the expedition struggled in the icy water with the temperature

hovering around zero to save sufficient fuel for the spring trip. A few casks that did not leak were finally hauled up. The others had to be abandoned. The blizzard that had quieted during the day returned. Heavy wind and drift made further efforts impossible.

This blizzard continued for the better part of two weeks. And since by that time the winter darkness had far progressed, all further advance of the inland caches had to be given up. Thus at the very outset was the fundamental plan of campaign materially damaged.

The winter of 1893–4 was a very hard one for Robert Peary the man. Its story is a grim one, unrelieved by that uniform optimism without which no Arctic party can hope to win.

Spring came. That is to say, by the calendar it was March 6, 1894. Eight white men, five Eskimos and ninety-two dogs plodded toward the Inland Ice with loaded sledges for the great trip across the top of Greenland, and thence to the end of the earth. The pale disc of the low sun skimmed for a few hours over the southern ice, and then as if discouraged at the ghastly, deathlike scene, sank below the horizon barely to the west of south. The temperature was 56 degrees below zero, which would not have penetrated the fur garments of the men had it not been borne into their very marrow on the wings of a sharp stabbing wind from the glacier.

The story of that dismal spring attempt has been vividly, though with meagre attention to its full

tragedy, told in Peary's own accounts. As was his custom, in writing it he soft-pedaled his own sufferings and his fearful disappointment.

Put briefly the effort consisted of an outward march to a point 124 miles northeast of the Lodge and 5,500 feet above sea level. First the Eskimos went home. Then Astrup succumbed to a severe attack of gastric fever. Lee came down two days later with a foot frozen so badly that it had commenced to fester. Both the crippled white men were sent back. Davidson then came down with a frozen heel that later had to be amputated. By this time so many men were under that Peary had no recourse but to dismiss the Surgeon from his advance party in order that the ill and injured might have proper attention at home. Dr. Vincent returned with Davidson.

This reduced the party to four men who struggled on until March 21st. That night the never-ceasing wind increased to a full gale. The little party was encamped on the open plateau exposed to the terrible blast that pounded their tiny tent with hurricane force. The temperature fell to 62 degrees below zero. Snow put on the alcohol lamp for tea would not get warm enough to melt. One by one the dogs outside froze to death until their number had been reduced by half. Clark's nose was badly frozen and he suffered torments from cramps. Entrekin froze all the fingers of one hand. Baldwin was frost-bitten in a dozen different spots. Ill-fortune seemed to hang close on the heels of the party.

"The seriously crippled third man," wrote Peary, "had both heels and great toes frozen, and was having daily attacks of bleeding from the nose. All, however, showed true grit and were willing to push on. But the crushing blow was the existence in my pack of dogs of the dreaded and incurable *piblockto* (madness), which with continued work and exposure might easily reduce my remaining pack to half its present number or even exterminate it entirely."

There was no solution save to cache the whole great store of bread, tea, milk, and pemmican there on the Ice-Cap if the men were to get back with their lives. This was done. A high signal was built to mark it, and an upright ski-pole lashed on top in case the drift were heavy.

Recuperation took about six weeks. By that time the Ice-Cap trip was out of the question. As soon as his men were in shape Peary organized surveying parties to cover Melville Bay and other little-known portions of the coast. Little was said about plans for the future. But the Leader let it be known that, contrary to the original expectation, he would remain and carry out his proposed crossing of North Greenland and continue to the Pole by the land and sea ice, if possible, during the next year.

On August 20th the *Falcon* was able to force her way into the ice of Bowdoin Bay up to the Lodge with Mr. H. G. Bryant and Emil Diebitsch, Mrs. Peary's brother, aboard, together with an extensive summer scientific party. On August 28th the *Falcon* left. Davidson and Carr were invalided home

aboard her. "The other members of my party," says the Diary, "had discovered that Arctic work was not entirely the picnic they had imagined, and wisely had decided to return home."

Hugh Lee and Matthew Henson elected to remain with their Leader. Susan Cross said she had had enough. With her on the ship there went perforce the chief treasures of Robert Peary's life: his Josephine and his tiny, smiling, but wholly ununderstanding, Marie Ahnighito. A sad moment for Peary the man to choose to go on when he could so easily have turned back.

CHAPTER X

DEFYING DEATH FOR A PROMISE

PROBABLY no explorer has ever felt more keenly than Peary his debt to those who backed his expeditions.

On his return from the Ice-Cap in April he had announced his intention of remaining north even if the ship came. This announcement was not necessary. The original understanding with those at home in the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences and others who handled the administrative side of the relief work was that a ship would not be sent for two years. But Peary reasoned that human doubt and curiosity would override this arrangement, and that a ship would be sent first, to rescue the white mother and her infant; and second, to bring back a party that was too poorly equipped—according to popular opinion—to spend two years north. Also there was the ever-haunting memory of the Greely horror.

Having decided that a ship might come, yet knowing he would stay, Peary gave his men these three months warning that in August they might have to decide whether or not they would remain with him. This was particularly illuminating as regards the Leader's fairness; for, prior to leaving the States, he

had exacted from each assistant a contract declaring that Peary should be the sole judge as to the length of time each man should remain north.

When his shattered party had recovered sufficiently to travel he now set forth with the strongest of his men to Melville Bay. His intention was to locate the large meteorites first reported by Sir John Ross in 1818. He was successful.

"This means," he confided in Mrs. Peary on his return to the Lodge, "that if the ship comes I can put one or two of the meteorites aboard her. By their sale or exhibition your brother or Heilprin can raise enough to send a ship next year."

"And if they don't?" interposed the anxious wife.

"They will. Don't worry."

But they didn't. Due to heavy ice in Melville Bay the *Falcon* was not able to get within 25 miles of the meteorites. Hope of money from the meteorites for a relief ship vanished.

"Never mind," Peary reassured his wife, "Lee, Matt and I can escape down the coast next spring and catch the boat to Copenhagen."

Meanwhile other members of the expedition had got their mail from the ship. Only two had decided to abide by their agreement to stay north.

For Peary the grief of parting was tempered by a certainty of success. At last he was stripped for battle. His original theory of a small, experienced party was now consummated. Moreover, he had won the full friendship of the natives. And he gloated over the fact that he had a huge cache of

provisions and fuel far inland on the Ice-Cap, in fact, more than a quarter of the way towards the other side.

To be sure, there was none too much to eat in the Lodge. But with fall hunting there should be secured plenty of caribou meat and walrus for both men and dogs. There still remained some coal which could be eked out with blubber lamps in the native style. How could one worry over primitive conditions at the base when the promise for a successful spring trip was so bright?

Peary describes the parting from the ship as he pushed off in his whaleboat bound back to Bowdoin Bay:

"Though the *Falcon* was separating me from those near and dear to me, she was carrying them to safety and to comfort; and she was leaving me with a small but experienced, effective, and loyal party. In the boat with me were my colored man, Henson, a dark-skinned, kinky-haired child of the Equator, and five of my faithful trusty Eskimo allies, dusky children of the Pole. Nearly two hundred miles north, at the Lodge at the head of Bowdoin Bay, was my other companion, brave, loyal Lee, awaiting my return. Cached on the Great Ice were all except a few minor supplies needed for the white march across the Cap the following spring and summer."

So tremendously favorable were all circumstances that Peary

"recognized but two eventualities which might defeat everything. First, was the breaking out of the

piblockto or epidemic dog madness among the native dogs, which if the attack were serious, might exterminate the animals of the tribe, and render it impossible for me to obtain dogs for the journey across the Ice-Cap. Second, the arrival to either one of us of that end which, in the words of brave Horatio, of that other three, 'comes to each man soon or late'."

But with the huge cache of supplies far inland on the ice he knew in his heart that only the most ordinary dexterity was needed to get away on time next spring.

Moreover, by the middle of September, after three weeks of arduous hunting the party had "two clear solid tons of the richest, most substantial, nutritious food for man and dog that this region affords—the dark, firm meat and dense blubber of the North-Atlantic walrus." He didn't add that this same meat is so black and greasy, so rank-flavored and tough, that the average white man requires a year of earnest endeavor to become acclimated to it.

The next job was to go up on the Ice-Cap and put the precious big cache in shape that had been left up there by the spring party. Lee and Henson with native helpers went first on the 2nd of October. They returned in four days with the disturbing news that they had been able to penetrate only a few miles; that the bamboo pole signals left standing last spring nine feet above the snow showed only a scant ten inches now; and that the snowfall was deep in every direction. The poles found were only direction markers and stood over none of the precious food.

With fear for his plans clutching at his heart Peary at once made ready and himself went up on the ice. The temperature fell to 16° below zero. But the weather was calm and clear. The approximate position of the big cache was reached beyond the 5,000 foot altitude mark. Day after day every foot of the vicinity was scoured for some sign of the high signal that had stood over the unreplaceable pile of pemmican, fuel, tea and biscuit: the lifeblood of the expedition. Not a vestige of a sign appeared on the blank unbroken whiteness of the snowy surface.

Then, as usual, came the tempest: the old roaring wind and hissing drift. Ensconced in the small frail tent Peary lay and listened to the

"infernal driving of the snow against the paper-thin walls, knowing that the demoniac white down-pour was destroying the last chance of finding my caches, and destroying all the work of the previous year on which I had counted so largely to assist me the next spring."

But the vicious gale continued.

"After three days of it I could not sleep. Plans for the future failed me. Interest in anything refused to be aroused; thoughts of wife and blue-eyed baby, of mother, pictures of boyhood, happy scenes and memories, before this devil of Arctic Exploration took possession of me, rose and ranged themselves opposite the precious hours of my life being wasted, the sacri-

After the Blizzard.

Wreck of camp and surviving dogs on Greenland Ice-Cap.

fices of me and mine, all perhaps to end in nought, till it seemed as if with this, the unceasing hissing of the wind and snow, I should lose my reason. Sunday evening especially, I thought of dear brown eyes and blue baby eyes until I could stand it no longer, and by brute force turned my thoughts elsewhere."

When the storm had passed again they searched, this time in frenzied haste, for the light had faded to a dusk and the short rations had been thinned to a point at which the ravenous body could scarcely keep out the biting cold. But it was to no purpose: "All our efforts were in vain; and blue-black night again folded the Great Ice in its embrace." The priceless cache was gone forever.

All was lost: nearly a ton and a half of supplies that could never be replaced, including every ounce of alcohol and pemmican "were forever and irrevocably buried in the insatiate maw of the Inland Ice: all the work of the past year completely blotted out!"

"I was stunned by my loss; I felt like a man shipwrecked upon an uninhabited shore, with nothing left him but the clothes upon his back." Nor was this all, for fog and wind came again. It was a gamble whether the crushed men could even reach the Lodge again. Indeed, they barely did; staggering in a week later frosted and starving.

It was one thing to face the long winter night on slender resources sustained by the thought that up on the ice lay the assurance of a splendid effort when

the sun returned. It was now another thing to face the interminable months of darkness with every hardship magnified a thousand times by despair.

Meanwhile another section of the drama was being enacted in the States. Mrs. Peary was not satisfied with her husband's scheme to escape down the Greenland coast during the following spring. She knew he would strain himself and his men to the limit on the Ice-Cap journey. She knew further that a trip to a south Danish port would be hazardous and hard. She had the word of agents that the ship from Copenhagen could not be counted on and might easily be missed as Peary had no details about its schedule. Moreover, counsel of those few alive who had had experience on the dreaded Melville Bay Ice was most disquieting.

She resolved to secure a ship at any cost. Any other plan of escape encompassed too much hazard for her man who was slaving in the darkening north.

A brief survey brought her the following facts: save for a very slender allotment from the Navy Department, barely enough to keep body and soul together for her and the baby, she had no money; neither had her husband. Yet the monthly stipends promised Hugh Lee and Matt Henson for their services were going on so long as he remained north. The cheapest ship she could possibly charter would cost $10,000 for the summer. All possible friends had been solicited to make up the final deficit just before the start fourteen months before. While all were sympathetic, none felt free to dig down deeper

in his pockets when the papers had already published the fact that Peary would return via South Greenland in the coming year.

Mrs. Peary bravely canvassed all the scientific societies that had been interested. If each of ten societies and universities could be persuaded to contribute $1,000 apiece the ship could be chartered. This was December. She always remembers the month because her anæmic bank account completely expired just before Christmas. However, things had begun to look a little more promising. Eight of the ten thousand dollars had been pledged according to the thousand-dollar plan. Then unexpectedly three dropped out, reducing the fund by $3,000. Mrs. Peary felt she might have held them but she had no money even to travel and her letters elicited only formal acknowledgments cruelly brief.

But a brave determined woman is a match for any man or combination of circumstances. She went to the family's old friend, Judge Daly, and told him her back was against the wall. The Judge averred that he was helpless but that he knew a rich New York man to whom he might introduce her, Mr. Morris K. Jesup, President of the American Museum of Natural History. "But I can't help you with him," he added. "Your salvation will be in your own hands."

Mr. Jesup proved very kind and understanding, but his greatest encouragement was to ask Mrs. Peary to appear before the Museum Board of Directors on the following day. All her woman's pride

rebelled at this. She was no beggar; neither was her husband. If there were insufficient scientific interest neither she nor her husband would permit the rescue to be made a matter of personal charity, no matter what the risk to life entailed.

With just a touch of defiance she laid the situation before the Board the next day. Young mother that she was she was petrified there before so august an assemblage of whiteheads. But she was brief and lucid, and her innate charm garnered the fluidity of her persuasion. She won the day so far as consent to help went. But this consent was poisoned by its presentation. "You go ahead," was in effect what Mr. Jesup told her. "Do all you can: solicit, and lecture; and then whatever you still need I shall see is made up." In other words when she failed, she was to come and drag her failure in for the alms of charity. At least that was the spirited interpretation which flashed across her mind.

"I'll lecture!" proudly she retorted. "And I'll make it all right. You needn't worry, Mr. Jesup."

Which were very fine words. But her knees shook as she said them. For the very thought of speaking in public filled her with horror.

She told her brother of her intention. He was not enthusiastic about her facing the dreadful ordeal he knew it would mean to her sensitive soul. But she was obdurate. Mr. Gardner Green Hubbard, father-in-law of Alexander Graham Bell, contributed a saving note when he suggested making a social affair of the first lecture which would be held in Washing-

ton. "We can have some slides made, too, and then you will speak in the dark," he added. But the lecturer-to-be went home and wept half the night.

The reception was held at the auditorium and under the auspices of the National Geographic Society. The house was packed. Such an enthusiastic audience had not been seen in history. Brother Emil superintended the working of the slides. The signal for change of scene was a ring on the buzzer which the lecturer held in her hand. As the lights were lowered and the speaker of the evening appeared upon the platform the buzzer began to sound. It continued without cessation throughout the lecture. Emil, knowing the clutch of nervous terror with which his sister held her end, and being familiar with the subject matter, quietly directed the slide-shifts at appropriate moments. At the conclusion of the hour the audience rose and cheered. The evening netted $2,000. A second lecture a few days later brought in the final $1,000 needed to get the ship.

Far in the North went on another struggle, not so terrifying because its participants were desperate men; but infinitely more bitter.

Peary had promptly set about preparing his nearly non-existent equipment for the journey he felt absolutely obligated to take. In every way he had to get back to first principles. He had no more pemmican. So he cut up the lean meat of venison and walrus and mixed them in nearly equal proportions with blubber. This was not as concentrated as the dried and compressed standard beef pemmican; but

it was good Indian-style stuff, and would do both for man and dog.

He had no more alcohol for fuel. This also eliminated his patent stoves. He had to choose between blubber and a little impure kerosene that had been rescued. As he needed the blubber for food he chose the latter. From bread-pans, biscuit containers and other scrap tin he fashioned special cookers with which to melt snow. This item is of the utmost importance in polar travel. The sledger in the Far North suffers from thirst far more than from cold. Except for the tea or water that is made each morning and evening the frozen wilderness permits no quenching liquid to pass his lips. Sucking ice or snow at low temperatures would wreck tongue and throat in no time.

Another serious handicap was that he had practically no trading material left with which to persuade the native drivers to help him with his loads of walrus up the first slopes, or the native seamstresses to sew him and his two men new fur shirts and skin boots without which the trip would be suicide. His dog harnesses were practically all gone. Ammunition had to be strictly husbanded due to the fact that so much of it had to be used in getting game enough to feed the ravenous dogs.

By Monday morning, April 1st, 1895, all papers, and a few spare rounds of ammunition, and other articles of value, had been buried under the floor of the Lodge, safe from fire and curious natives. Letters were given to the most reliable Eskimos to hand

to the white men who might come with a ship in case the Ice-Cap party was never heard from again. Hugh Lee, Matthew Henson, and Peary with six native drivers, six sledges and sixty dogs then started up the familiar moraine that led to the Inland Ice. After the first steep declivity had been mounted the natives reminded Peary again of the frightfulness of the Ice-Cap and of the dreadful spirits that dwelt therein and departed.

The weeks that followed were just a repetition of other weeks on the great ice, save that their hardship was accentuated by the fact that the men found frozen pemmican, made of half-spoiled venison and walrus was very indigestible no matter what the degree of determined courage behind its use as food.

At the end of 400 miles, almost within sight of land on the other side, Peary announced that the party would return. He was as direct as usual:

"I do not feel I have the moral right to take your two lives into my hands and continue farther," he said, "not knowing certainly that we shall find game on the other coast. The amount of food we have left, even counting the meat of our living dogs, is just barely sufficient to take us home."

Brave Lee spoke up: "If you had only yourself to consider in this matter, would you take a chance on finding musk-ox on the other side again?"

Perhaps there was a moment's hesitation. Then, "I would," said Peary quietly.

"Then I am going on, sir."

But there was a third to be considered in the little

drama up there on the white Ice-Cap, 8,000 feet in the air, thousands of miles from the haunts of civilized man and with the mournful whisper of the unceasing wind as an accompaniment.

"How do you feel about it, Matt?" asked the Leader.

Matt shrugged over the dog-harness he was repairing. "Where you folks go, suh, I reckon I'll go too," was the softly drawled reply.

But it was some hours before the official decision came in the shape of "All right, boys. It means pretty short rations even to the musk-ox pastures. But we'll make it, I think."

More weeks of toil. And then once more Peary looked out over the tempting unknown land of ultimate North Greenland from the summit of Navy Cliff.

"We were now over 500 miles in a direct line from the Lodge," he wrote in his diary. This meant nearly 600 miles by the sledge route. "I had eleven dogs, all of them completely exhausted, and three so nearly dead they were fit only for food. If we found musk-oxen down below, well and good. If we did not, not a dog in the pack, even under the most favorable circumstances, would get more than a third of the distance back to the Lodge."

He did not add that the men could not possibly get more than two-thirds of the way back even if every day were fair, a miracle that never happens for more than a few days at a time on that bedeviled portion of the globe.

It took one solid week of hunting to secure a musk-ox. The story of that week makes too painful reading to transcribe here. By that time several more of the dogs had died and the men were fainting with hunger. Moreover the physical reaction of descending from 8,000 feet to sea level, from bitterly cold temperatures of the upper ice to the relatively torrid heat of the lowlands further sapped the strength of both man and beast.

As no more musk-oxen were seen and since the party was very low in strength, all hopes of a dash to the Pole by way of the land to the north had to be abandoned. This in itself was the final and greatest blow Peary had to suffer at that period of his life.

On June 1st the return journey began. Everything which was not absolutely indispensable to life but the diary was cached behind. One theodolite was retained for navigating across the Inland Ice while out of sight of land. One rifle and nine cartridges were taken: one for each of the surviving dogs. Sleeping bags were left. On June 9th, 400 miles from home, Lee gave out. A day's rest made it possible for him to stumble along. The dogs began dying one by one. The diary reads: "June 10th, 1895: Another dog falls exhausted. This leaves us six." Two storms in rapid succession caused another delay. Dogs were soon down to two. The men dragged the sledges.

The men were now eating dog meat. At 50 miles from the Lodge there was one dog left. There was

no more food, no more oil, no more strength—so it seemed. In writing about it afterwards Peary said:

"We were not troubled with hopes or fears as to any fortunate chance which might throw help in our way. There would be no searching for us. There was no one to search. Neither was there any possibility in this dead desert of coming upon a bear or seal with which to put new life into us. We knew the immutable facts of our problem. They had the cold precision of mathematics."

At fifty miles there was but one hope: that was to leave the sledge and its thin foodless load and try to walk in. A sudden storm, or even a slight blow with fog or drift would mean the end. The last staggering dog alive was unharnessed. He was fed a pair of sealskin boots and a few yards of rawhide line. Then the three men set off. Each man walked as long as he could and then lay down to rest in the snow. His companion who had been behind him passed and left him lying there for a time. Peary's orders were that all were to keep in sight of one another. In this haphazard fashion, and with the wind mercifully relieved for once by a kind Providence, the procession plodded on.

The party reached the Lodge on the afternoon of June 25. They ate sparingly for some time. But their long fast had done damage. All were ill for many days.

Panikpah, the last dog, gave out on his way in. But he struggled down to the house later, and Peary

fed him and cared for him tenderly with his own hands.

"Poor brute! the memory of those famine days upon the Great Ice remained so vividly with him that for weeks after our return though weak and afflicted like ourselves, he might be seen at any time when not asleep hiding away every bit of meat or blubber and every bone that he could find about the place."

Peary felt he had failed: but he had kept faith with those who believed in him.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST PRIZE HOME

"THE Fates and all Hell are against me: but I'll conquer yet!"

What a hollow ring the words had now that he had failed! For to a man of Peary's iron will not to win was to lose. In his fight just ended he had had for the first time the full support of a large body of the American public. Before he had been backed by a few men of scientific vision. But after his triumphal march across the continent in 1893 all the natural sentiments of his countrymen had sprung up in full force to help him subdue the feared and hated North. His plan had been faultless in its logic. But, like many another Arctic plan, it was and could be founded only on what had gone before. There came the unexpected. The Leader had risen to great heights of courage and resource to meet the emergency. His work, when revealed to the world, was to arouse the warmest sort of approval by all who had the penetration to judge it fairly. But the black shadow of his despondency at failure obscured all happiness.

"I have failed," he entered simply in his diary and laid the pencil down.

Dreary weeks followed the return of the three weak men to the Lodge. For a long time none felt inclination to do anything but lie about. Journey to the brook a hundred yards away for water was a serious task, and impossible of accomplishment without several stops for rest. Obstinate diarrhœa wrung from the three the last vestiges of their strength and will power.

"Within an hour or so after rising in the morning our feet and legs from just above the knees down would swell almost to bursting, the articulation of knee and ankle disappearing entirely."

The mental depression suffered by all was often more unbearable than their physical anguish.

"I felt the sharpest extremes of feeling," said Peary. "At times it seemed as if I could not wait another moment for the ship to bring my brown eyes and my blue eyes to me; then I felt that even were the ship here I could not go on board and say I had failed. At times I even hoped the ship would not come at all."

Yet sick in heart and weak in body, he was not the man to lie and whimper. It was characteristic of every expedition he ever made that fail though he might, he never gave up trying to do something worth while. So when he ended his 1895 Ice-Cap trip with the knowledge that he had not found the new road to the Pole he had hoped for, he roused

himself to a new expedient for the furtherance of his ultimate triumph. He had already located the "Iron Stones" of the natives in an almost inaccessible portion of Melville Bay. When the steamer *Kite* arrived in August, 1895, he had her headed southeast towards the extemporized prize. He had expected the *Falcon*, but she had unhappily been lost with all on board on her return from Philadelphia to St. John's after landing Mrs. Peary and party in the previous autumn.

It is nearly incredible that there remained in Peary sufficient moral strength of leadership at this time to direct the work of securing the first two of the three meteorites. Ice in upper Melville Bay was dense and far-reaching. The captain and passengers of the ship were in no mind to risk imprisonment for the winter. Moreover, the portion of the Bay where "Meteorite Island" lies was traditionally known as the graveyard of ships. There were two severe snowstorms and a southwest gale at the outset of the effort. Yet Peary would not yield to the timorous suggestions of those around him that a retreat be made.

The two smaller meteorites were known by the Eskimos by the names "The Dog" and "The Woman" from their rough resemblance to a curled up sleeping dog and a seamstress sitting crosslegged. The Dog weighed about 1,000 lbs., and lay nearly a quarter of a mile from the shore. The Woman lay just beyond, but weighed about 6,000 lbs. Some six miles south of this pair lay a third and immensely larger one

known as "The Tent," of a size undetermined at this time. When it was ultimately secured The Tent proved to have the enormous weight of nearly 100 tons or around 200,000 lbs.

Meteorite Island lies about 35 miles to the eastward of Cape York. The *Kite* forced her way through trash ice and narrow leads to the solid floes that surrounded the land on which lay the prized masses of stellar steel. Ice hooks were put out and the ship made fast for taking on board her strange cargo.

Previous sledge trips had given Peary a good idea of what should be the plan of action. As was his custom, he had mapped out just what the procedure should be on reaching the Island. This program with the professional counsel of Mr. Diebitsch, Peary's brother-in-law, who had led the relief expedition, ran with unexpected smoothness for the first few days.

A path was at once leveled off by the natives as far as possible from the high location of The Dog to the point of the beach nearest the ship. This point was a narrow stretch of low shore leading on either side to declivitous bluffs. The ship's crew manned the jacks and soon had the 1,000-pound mass underway on a heavy sledge of spruce poles. A massive ice-floe was resorted to as a barge on which to float the meteorite to the ship where it was hoisted aboard and stowed neatly just above the keelson.

The Woman, with the pertinacity of her sex, gave more trouble. Apparently the Almighty Devil of the natives resented her unexpected rape from the

soil of her native land. Scarcely had work begun on her than a chill wind swept down from the Ice-Cap and the snow driven before it began to pluck petulantly at the toes and fingers of the unacclimated toilers. But for Peary's unswerving will and the cheering assurance of his hearty commands the iron lady would certainly have been left. It took the combined forces of all Eskimos and every sailor and passenger available to coax her to the beach. Once more an ice-floe raft was cut and timbered ways laid for loading her aboard. After the open water came nearly a mile of solid ice across which the meteorite had to be dragged before the donkey engine could take its grip. Three times the ice buckled and cracked. Each time the Eskimos howled their native "I-told-you-sos." But in the end The Woman lay in the *Kite's* hold beside The Dog, and the job was done.

While this work was proceeding Peary gave what attention he could to the great meteorite further south, The Tent. He kept small parties of shovellers at work in the frozen soil whenever men were free. But he failed to disclose the full dimensions of the enormous bulk. Once he managed to get two ten-ton jacks under the monster with sufficient purchase to exert their full power. But his only result was to cripple the jacks beyond repair. He strove to cut and break a point off the meteorite in order to take a sample back to the States. But this effort also proved abortive. Surely here was a metallurgical jewel worth the world's serious attention.

It was to this single idea that Peary thenceforward clung as a drowning man clutches wildly at the trifling flotsam in the vortex of his dying struggle. For not only was Peary's mood now one of desperation, but the naked facts of his case were too damning for him to elude. He had passed the crest of his physical hardihood. He still possessed his natural constitution of hickory-hard muscles and rugged frame. But fearful strain of the Ice-Cap struggle had stretched certain invisible fibers of his body beyond their elastic limit.

That he and Mrs. Peary were destitute and in debt had become so constant a condition they no longer felt from it an acute unhappiness, but only a sort of dull annoyance unrelieved by any prospect of change. His new story was not different enough from his first one to make lecturing very profitable. And the fickle public took the attitude that he had been a flash in the pan after all.

"The Fates and all Hell are against me," he told his Josephine. "*But I'll conquer yet.*"

"Only remember, Bert dear, there are two of us to consider now," she told him gently.

Surprise widened his eyes. "You mean you would have me give up!"

"Never . . . Only keep your balance, Bert. That is all I ask."

And that was what the brave woman stood for. She who of all the world besides himself knew of the inner fire that burned and burned. It was she who kept the balance for him. The greatest of men can

carry only so much of a burden alone. Beyond a certain point there must be a quick and ready hand at their elbow to keep the balance. Josephine Peary did that in these dark days, and others.

Peary of course approached the Navy Department almost immediately upon his return in the fall of 1895 for permission to continue his Arctic work. He was now the most experienced Arctic explorer in the world; and despite his apparent "failure" he had proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he could achieve what other men believed so impossible that many even doubted whether he had accomplished as much as he claimed to have done. The prejudiced violence with which his approach was rebuffed convinced him of the hopelessness of getting further leave at the time.

But Peary nosed boldly through the salvos of hard affronts that met him in Washington and by sheer inertia of his public prestige managed to secure detail in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. This, as will be seen, put him in a strategic position for his next move in the great battle of his lifetime.

He lectured when he could secure a week-end or evening off because he so sorely needed funds. But he also strove manfully to uphold the professional end of his life which was so handicapped by time and energy spent in an alien environment, and by the captious attitude of his naval colleagues. His life these days seemed a series of wholly unwarranted buffetings by Fate. Once the drydock for which he was personally responsible caved in. Subsequent

investigation proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that a criminal parsimony on the part of the government had made it necessary to use this dock's caisson or gates long beyond their safe limits of disrepair. But brutal professional opinion once more aimed caustic comment at the "results of a man's fanaticism in a direction not professional." Not once was the true fact ever brought to light that outside actual warfare there is probably nothing more truly naval duty, both by propinquity and by tradition, than the exploration of the unknown oceans of the globe. In the instance we note Robert Peary took his medicine with his customary taut lips. Josephine took the lecture with knees shaking.

Then the old slow building process began. Drowning in disaster, as he felt himself to be, Peary clutched at the straw of scientific interest in the prize meteorite still north. There had been many doubters as to the authenticity of meteoric origin of the two small ones he had brought forth. Portions of the press played cruelly to the gallery of chronic doubters when they suggested Peary was exploiting public credulity over his prizes in order to equip himself for further work. Yet there was an element of truth in such reports because verily Peary was using his two "stellar stones" to wade from the slough of despond in which he had found himself.

He repeated his tactics of the years when Nansen's success in 1888 had swept support away. He played up the human interest side of the meteorites; became, as it were, the good showman again. He emphasized

the astonishing mystery of the Cape York meteorites: Sir John Ross had heard in 1818 of the existence of a so-called "iron mountain" within the land of the Smith Sound tribe of Eskimos. But since Nordenskiold later discovered globular telluric iron about 500 miles south on the Island of Disco it was believed that the semi-mythical iron of the northern tribe was only another outcrop of a similar nature.

However, as Peary adroitly brought out, Ross and others had discovered knives and implements of fine steel among the Eskimos that could only be chippings of meteoric metal. This deduction was not new. The Eskimos were the last Stone Age men on earth, and showed no signs of ever having mastered the art of making or tempering steel. Whence scientists and mariners concluded that it would be a great feat to discover the actual origin of the legendary "Iron Mountain."

About 1840 the King of Denmark organized an expedition for the express purpose of bringing home the truth about this scientific prize. He failed. The North Star Expedition in 1849 likewise failed. Whaling captains went out of their way to seek information about the mystery. They also failed. One of the objects of the British expedition of 1875 was to solve the mystery. This expedition failed. And so on down to Peary. He alone so won the confidence of the Eskimos that they of their own free will led him to the "Iron Mountain" from which the tribe for untold centuries had been securing their priceless bits of tempered steel, by which thin margin

the tribe was separated from absolutely primitive man. Peary found not a mountain or vein of iron, but three large masses of homogeneous metal, "the peculiar and unmistakable characteristics of which, and especially the nature of their surroundings, proved them to be beyond the possibility of doubt, true meteoric irons." These were his words at the time; and they have since been substantiated by the great metallurgical authorities of the world.

"But their wealth of interest does not end here," he continued with an eloquence born of the fire of Inspiration within him. "The Ahnighito (the other name for The Tent, or largest meteorite) far surpasses in size the largest of the known meteorites in the world, and The Woman is exceeded by but one or two specimens in the world's great museums. The Cranbourne meteorite in the British Museum weighs some 8,000 pounds. The gems of the National Museum, the Paris Museum, the Yale University Museum and the Field Columbian Museum weigh respectively 2,500, 1,709, 1,630, and 1,013 pounds; while the largest in the museums of Vienna and the University of Bonn are still smaller."

He played upon imaginative themes with equal dexterity:

"In contemplating these brown masses, a host of strange fancies, speculations, and queries crowd upon one. If the meteorites fell in summer, how the seal must have plunged for the water, and the polar bears rushed at full speed over the ice-floes, fear stricken by the awful cataclysm! Eskimo tradition declares

the masses fell from the sky. What terror in the long dark winter night, the detonations, the blinding glare, and the earthquake shock of their fall must have caused among the poor savages cowering in their shaking stone and turf huts! Was it strange that they had thought that the sun itself had broken loose and was falling upon the earth, and that the earth was going to pieces under the shock, like one of their own icebergs?

"The fact that The Woman and The Dog were not buried in the ground and that there were no indications of crushing of the rocks beneath them or abrasion or indentation of the under surfaces of the meteorites themselves, would seem to indicate that they had originally descended upon the surface of the then much expanded ice sheet, and upon its recession had settled gently to the positions in which they were found.

"Next and most astonishing, how did these poor aborigines discover the qualities of the material composing the masses, and the uses to which it could be put, and then devise means of availing themselves of it? The spectacle of these little fur-clad children of the ice-floes using for centuries a heaven-invented alloy (nickel-steel) which is almost precisely the same in its composition as the nickel-steel armour plate with which we are protecting our battleships today, is to me one of the most striking in the annals of Arctic exploration."

Interesting as these quotations are they are not transcribed here to embellish the details of another story, but to bring out in unmarred clarity the compelling strength of Peary's offense. Peary was thirty-nine; and had failed; and his physical strength had

begun to ebb. He was poverty stricken, not only in money but in popularity. He was doubted, derided and attacked. Yet the fire in him only kindled the brighter. And he fought back with the fateful zest of a man inspired. Which, we know now, he was.

"Where did he get the money?" asked some when it was announced in the spring of 1896 that Peary had chartered the steamer *Hope* of 307 tons to go after the largest meteorite. Others, mostly naval, exclaimed incredulously: "But how did that lunatic get leave?"

The answer was simple. His clear-cut eloquence had won sufficient public sympathy at last; and public sympathy had once more triumphed over official pragmatism.

The *Hope* reached Cape York August 9th. As the ice had not yet broken up in Melville Bay, two weeks were spent helping the friendly natives get their winter supply of walrus meat. How different were such relations with the Eskimos from those that had prevailed before Peary's day! On August 22 with a fine gang of native helpers the ship left Cape York for Meteorite Island. Ensued two weeks of violent toil in a desperate effort to free The Tent (Ahnighito) and get it aboard. Day and night, before autumn storms set in, the fight went on. Soon the huge mass was clear. It proved larger than even Peary had suspected. The sixty-ton jack broke on its second attempt to roll the mammoth lump of metal over. Two 30-ton jacks gave up the ghost immediately afterward. The 100-ton jack, which seemed almost

as ponderous as the meteorite itself, was all that remained. With this mechanism The Tent was slowly moved upward from its resting place and onward toward the hill-slope down which it must be rolled.

"It was interesting to watch the stubbornness of the monster as it sulked and hung back to the last inch," wrote Peary. "Never have I had the terrific majesty of the force of gravity and the meaning of the terms 'momentum' and 'inertia' so powerfully brought home to me as in handling this mountain of iron. No purchase or appliance which we could bring to bear upon it, outside the jacks, made the slightest impression."

Then came the well-known devils of wind and snow that had so many times before crumpled Peary's plans to a shapeless mass. The ship tore at her moorings among the grinding floes and her skipper shook his head. Finally, when young ice formed and imprisonment on short rations threatened, Peary sadly swallowed another defeat and ordered the task abandoned. But he left Ahnighito handily on the beach of her island, and blocked a foot from the ground for the next affray.

He has left us no written record of the winter that followed his return. But we know by hearsay how the bitterness of his position was accentuated by another failure, while the flame of his (and Josephine's—God bless her!) courage burned undimmed. Again the destitution, professional acerbity, and public doubt had to be met and overcome. But he was equal to

Improvised Ice Raft.

Used to transport meteorite from shore to ship. Eskimo is sitting on the meteorite at right center.

the task. And, amazing to relate, on August 12, 1897, we find him again aboard the *Hope*, forty and thin and grim visaged, moored there to the ice-floes off Meteorite Island in inner Melville Bay.

This time he was able to lay the ship right up to the land. And there were aboard her hydraulic jacks and mighty wire hawsers, chains and tackles, huge timbers and a variety of other mechanisms calculated to make short work of Ahnighito.

It is only by the strongest effort that we resist the temptation to repeat the classic story of how Ahnighito was brought aboard the *Hope*. A bridge of timbers was constructed from ship to shore. But not an ordinary bridge, for probably not in history had such a weight with such concentration ever been so moved before.

Think for a moment what ninety tons can mean. Ninety wagon loads of coal. A ship larger than any Columbus or Magellan sailed. A 16-inch modern cannon. Several freight cars. A house of many stories. And all concentrated in a space smaller than the vestibule of a residence scarcely taller than a man, and no wider than he could reach. The engineering problems involved alone were staggering.

Add to this the driving rain and sleet, then snow and low temperature, slippery surfaces and constantly rupturing gear. "Oh, it is a grand story!" cried old Captain John Bartlett of the staunch ship which brought the great prize home.

Then there were extraordinary difficulties of lowering the mass into the hold; of distributing the merci-

less crushing weight over the inner timbers; of securing it for the terrific storm soon met in Baffin Bay.

But on Saturday, October 2, 1897, the hundred ton floating crane lifted the giant from the *Hope* and deposited it upon the quay wall of the New York Navy Yard,

"the largest known meteorite in the world, and a meteorite with human associations such as attach to no other. Three years of persevering effort had won. The great Star Stone of the North, traced to its ice matrix and torn therefrom, had been brought safely out through the ice, the storms, and darkness of the Arctic seas."

Once more Peary had kept a promise to his public.

CHAPTER XII

FATE'S JOKE

AGAIN in 1898 we find Fate jesting with her puppet, Robert Peary. She had inspired him to go north at a time when going north was looked upon as a species of insanity. She had broken his leg when he most needed legs. She had plunged the country into the silver panic of '93, just when a national financial panic was the only thing that could have prevented his collecting the last few paltry thousands of dollars he needed for his expedition. She had brought him triumph and success when he was to be undone by ill-luck on the Ice-Cap at the very time when triumph and success should have culminated in enduring fame. In a sense she had taunted him with the meteorites and tempted him with side issues of a professional nature. But the culmination of Fate's jests came when Peary concluded that the North Pole could be reached by basing near Etah, North Greenland, and traveling by sledge through the narrow channel north: Kane Basin and beyond.

Sketching the next four years of his life briefly, 1898–1902, he shifted his line of attack upon the Pole from the Ice-Cap to the sea ice just west of

Greenland. His idea was to change his method completely: to push a ship as far northward as possible to a winter harbor on the Greenland coast; and then with the returning dawn of early spring to travel light and fast due north until the Pole was reached.

With an effective temerity he secured five years' leave of absence in the spring of 1898 and went north in the steamer *Windward*. She left him only a few miles beyond the point at which he had been basing for the Ice-Cap journeys. Three times ships went north for him. But he refused to return. For four terrible years he failed; not gloriously as he had upon the Inland Ice, but so dismally that to the end of his life he never wrote more than a few curt pages about that awful period; and he wrote them only because he felt it his duty to make some sort of report to those who had backed him.

The story of those years was all failure. He failed and failed and failed. His men deserted. His Eskimos died. His feet lost their toes by freezing. He had at times literally no food nor equipment. He seemed shackled to a lost cause. Yet in the very abyss of his failure he won the knowledge that ultimately brought him success. For it was the knowledge of conditions along the neck of the Kane Basin bottle that enabled Peary to take the *Roosevelt* twice to the shores of the Polar Sea and bring her safely home. And it was the knowledge of sea-ice travel that he could have learned in no other way than weary tramping over thousands of miles of torn sea ice that made it possible for him to

develop his strategy of the Polar Sea which won him his goal in 1909.

The spectacle in 1897 of the man's straight-line advance towards his ultimate achievement is confounding. We have called it his Inspiration, for that is the only term which seems appropriate. But at times, such as in the winter of 1897–98, Peary seemed to have been more than just a man motivated by an overwhelming desire; he appeared like an automaton within whose anatomy a living Spirit had found abode. It was uncanny that a man of forty-two, happily married, with an assured profession, and already a survivor by purest chance from the most violent environment imaginable, should be willing to persist still further in his quest. Men thought him mad, and justly so.

Between poverty, scientific and naval prejudice, and by pure physical depreciation from what he had in the past endured, Peary's chance of ever continuing his Polar quest after the summer of 1897 wasn't one in a million. Yet when he left Cape York with the meteorites in September, 1897, he left instructions with the Eskimos about what meat, dogs, drivers and equipment he would need in July, 1898.

In the autumn of 1897 debt became so pressing that he investigated the possibility of entering civil life. The Navy paid him a monthly wage of a little over $200. Mrs. Peary had written her *Arctic Diary*, but the royalties had gone to get a ship in 1895. Major Pond still harked back to the great lecture success of 1893, but could not do much with

the limited additions Peary could make to his former theme.

In this connection Peary had brought back several natives with the last meteorite. It was his idea that they would provide an interesting ethnological and anthropological study. Considerable public notice was given at first. But when the softening effects and the bacteria of civilization began an inroad on bodies used to the pure air of the far North, the Eskimos began to die, principally of pneumonia. So the net result was only that public favor recoiled and condemned the man who had been so rash as to shift the hapless savages from their native soil.

Surreptitiously Peary canvassed the few men he could trust with personal matters. The Frederick A. Stokes Company had contracted to bring out in two volumes the account of his Arctic work thus far. This book *Northward Over the Great Ice* promised substantial return so far as books went. But the few thousands of dollars in royalties would not put its author even with the game thus far, much less provide for another expedition. Undaunted he proposed a series of Arctic books dealing with each phase of northern life; or a scientific series such as had never been attempted before; or even a shelf of fiction the scenes of which would be laid in the unique environment of Eskimo land. But the publishers only shook their heads. They were willing to consider any manuscript with friendly eyes; but they would make no promises.

Inquiry into other lines was equally fruitless.

There came of his effort several propositions to make use of Peary's unequalled force of character in going through with anything that he started. But each proposition was predicated on the assurance that he give all his time and thought to the work in hand, and completely divorce himself from polar interests. And since his polar interests were on his side the chief premise of labor, any contractual plan for his employment was totally out of the question.

In January of that winter he attended by invitation the meeting of the American Geographical Society where he made the first formal and public declaration of his entire plan to reach the North Pole. The basic details of this plan were never changed, and ended in complete success. He was presented with the Cullum gold medal the same evening.

Leave was granted that winter to go to London to receive the Royal Geographical Society's gold medal. There was considerable Arctic and Antarctic spirit in the air at the time. The Belgian Antarctic Expedition in the *Belgica* was heading for the South Polar Ice Barrier at the time. Nansen had not long before been rescued in Franz Joseph Land by the British Expedition under Jackson. And Sir Clements Markham, whose sledge trails Peary was to follow, was the leading spirit of the Society about to honor the American explorer.

Permitting no grass to grow under his feet Peary let it be known that he was in the market for a ship to take him north in the following summer. That he had no money and less prospects of ever getting

north again did not dampen the buoyancy of his secret determination to be on his way to Greenland within six months.

The Dundee Whale and Seal Fishing Company of Dundee, Scotland, came forward and offered the *Terra Nova* to the distinguished visitor for only 10,000 pounds sterling, a very reasonable figure, as she was a good ship. Later she was sold to Mr. Ziegler of New York at a reputed price of $125,000 for the relief of the Fiala Expedition in the Spitzbergen sector. The offer to Peary was important in that had he been able to accept it he no doubt could have reached the North Pole at least five years sooner than he did; and all the expense of building the *Roosevelt* and of chartering relief ships in the next few years might have been avoided. As Peary felt this in his bones he sent several cables in a vain effort to raise the deposit required to take over the ship. He approached a wealthy American who was in London at the time and endeavored to get him interested in Arctic matters. But to no purpose. The rich man's reply was brutally frank: "They tell me you don't know when to stop, Mr. Peary. I am always loath to help such a person."

"Others have tried to apply theory to my ideas, sir," retorted Peary with equal candor, "but have always failed."

It chanced that at that very moment a young British newspaperman named Alfred Harmsworth had just come into his own. Lord Northcliffe, as most of us now know him, had not long before started

a new paper known as the *Daily Mail*, which was at this time achieving a meteoric success. Its owner was now looking about for new ideas and men to patronize. Peary appealed to him as the type of fighter that he should have liked in his own organization. In fact Peary was possessed of many of the qualities that marked the publisher out from his fellows. "Northcliffe made his way in the world," later wrote his American executive, "through ignoring the conventional and striking out on new lines." Peary's refusal to follow orthodox methods of Arctic exploration, his utilization of the despised Eskimos, his quick rejection of the British contempt of dog-teams in the far North, his radical ideas about small parties and light equipment, all aroused Northcliffe's highest admiration.

Northcliffe in his usual impulsive manner at once called on Peary and discussed Arctic work with intelligent appreciation of what Peary had done. His personal impression at once convinced him, so he afterward related, that here was a man bound to win. Having come to this conclusion he promptly offered Peary as a gift the steamer *Windward* which had been used in the Harmsworth expedition to Franz Joseph Land. To embellish the gift he offered to have her re-engined in time to be delivered in New York before the summer season. The offer was like manna from heaven to the poverty-stricken Peary and was gratefully accepted.

On his return to the United States with European approval of his plan as well as a real ship in sight,

Peary began the work of collecting funds necessary for the provision, personnel and equipment for his proposed voyage. But despite the general friendliness of many influential men who admired his persistence as well as his Greenland exploits, there was sadly wanting a specific enthusiasm in the enterprise.

The chief objection was that nothing new was promised in his scheme. To be sure he had proved himself a stalwart sledger, a courageous leader, and a tactful hand at managing the natives. But, it was pointed out both orally and through editorial columns in leading papers, many lives and immense quantities of money had already been expended along exactly the same route that Peary contemplated following.

Peary was politely informed on every hand his hopes were founded on very anæmic premises. He had a small weak ship incapable of reaching a high latitude. He had almost no money. He had had no experience on the sea ice. He did not even know the coast he would have to traverse. Despite his wonderful marches across the Ice-Cap, he could not hope to apply to the tide-torn floes of Kane Basin the principles that had happened to work out on the marble surface of the glacial roof of the Greenland continent. Many experts surviving from previous expeditions were unanimous in upholding these sentiments. Peary noted that they were also still unanimous in branding the Eskimo as a lying knave and the sledge dog as an impractical glutton, both

of which beliefs he had long since exploded. But he was one man with an axe to grind against a score of experts with a legend to defend for the sake of their reputations.

The gist of the advice he received was: "Give it up and send the *Windward* back to Northcliffe."

More serious than advice was the fact that about this time word had reached the Navy Department that Lieutenant Peary was active in preparing for another Arctic expedition. This report had been met with considerable incredulity throughout the winter. No opportunity had been missed in a semi-official way to impress the fractious Lieutenant with the fact that the Navy had an acid distaste for further efforts on his part to waste time in the north. Moreover, he had exceeded the bounds of propriety and tradition on several occasions when he had brought civilian pressure to bear upon those in power in order that he might secure the leave necessary for his voyages. That he now had the effrontery to think of going again, not only in the face of severe disapproval throughout his service, but at a time when war was at hand, frankly flabbergasted his seniors in Washington.

On the morning of April 12, 1897, he found an official letter lying on his desk in the Navy Yard. He paled as he read the document. In part its words were: "You will proceed to San Francisco, California, and report to the Commandant at the Naval Station, Mare Island, for such duty as he may assign."

The axe had fallen.

He wasted no time in diplomatic correspondence. Instantly he wrote out a request for five years' leave of absence and started it on the way to the Secretary of the Navy. As this request had to pass the gamut of those who most scorned Arctic exploration he realized what it would look like after it had been ornamented with their endorsements. Two hours later he had an audience with Mr. Jesup who had proved of late so friendly, not only to Peary's ideas but to "the steadfast and unswerving determination of the Peary family," as he put it. He still remembered when Mrs. Peary had gone on the lecture platform and raised her own funds rather than accept the money he offered her with the string of charity dangling behind it. Mr. Jesup listened gravely while Peary pointed out the items with which he had now to contend: the bitter opposition in Washington to his going north again; the suspicion that War might come; the continued lack of funds; and finally the orders that had just arrived peremptorily removing him from the scene of action just when he should be in the east.

Mr. Jesup realized with Peary how nearly next to insuperable was such a unique combination of handicaps as the whole scheme now faced. But Peary had fired him with something of his old fighting spirit, which goes of necessity into all Arctic enterprise. Before sunset of the same day Mr. Jesup had approached a dozen other prominent men with the suggestion that they write personal letters to the

Secretary of the Navy urging him to release Peary for the important work yet to be done in the North. These letters were all written; and the enthusiastic tenor of their contents remains to this day fine evidence of the driving power of Peary's will even when vicariously employed.

But the effort was in vain. Courteous but brief refusals to entertain or support such an idea were sent to the authors of the letters. And Peary himself received a second official notice to the effect that he must relinquish all idea of going north, and must leave at once for his new California station. This second letter contained an ominous note which Peary did not miss.

Things looked black indeed. Not a single means of escape presented itself either to Peary or to his sympathetic friends. All wire-pulling had failed miserably and the Secretary of the Navy not only remained adamant, but began more and more to show his irritation at the young lieutenant's machinations. It began to look very much as if Peary would have to go to California after all, unless his creditors got him into jail first.

Then one afternoon, a day or two before he was scheduled to leave for the West Coast, he by chance was introduced to Mr. Charles A. Moore, a prominent and "regular" Republican of the New York district. Mr. Moore knew nothing about the Polar Sea; but something in Peary appealed to his fighting instincts. He listened to Peary's story. Then he said: "How much leave would you like?"

"Five years," shot back Peary.

"Very well. I'll get it for you!" came the startling reply.

Mr. Moore went in person to the Secretary of the Navy. "You'll do me a favor?" he asked. The Secretary jumped at such a chance to reward a man who had done so much to put the Republicans in power. But when he heard that Peary was the object of the other's philanthropy his color flamed up and he shouted: "*Anything* but that, Moore!"

"Oh, very well," retorted the politician coolly. "Then I'll get the President to order you to do what I want." Eye and ear witnesses of the episode say that the naval Secretary turned purple at this. Evidently the Peary business had gotten on his nerves.

Mr. Moore crossed the street and was closeted with Mr. McKinley within an hour. His immense power in the great metropolis gave him entrée where another would have cooled heels or failed. "You remember, Mr. McKinley, that you said to come to you if I ever wanted anything?"

"I do," said the President courageously. He knew the danger of recalling campaign promises. But Moore was a man who had never once claimed his reward, so he braced himself for something stupendous.

"I want Lieutenant Peary of the Navy granted five years' leave in order to continue his great work in the north."

The President leaned back in his chair. A smile of

relief played over his kindly features. "Oh, is that all, Moore!" he chuckled. "Of course I'll do it." He sent for his secretary and dictated a memorandum to the Navy Department.

"May I take it over myself?" asked his visitor. Mr. Moore could not resist the temptation. In later years he said that he had even contemplated wiring for Peary to join him when he recrossed the street and handed the Secretary of the Navy the President's personal order that the explorer be released for five whole years. But, so he added, he was afraid that bloodshed might result. Perhaps he was right.

Notice of five years' leave granted reached Lieutenant Peary 48 hours later. But his way was not clear yet. Fate had another chuckle coming.

At 9:45 on the evening of February 15, 1898, the *U. S. S. Maine* was blown up in Havana Harbor, only 48 out of her complement of 353 men escaping uninjured.

At 7:10 the following morning Peary, garbed in an old-fashioned nightshirt, brought in the morning paper. He glanced at the headlines and tossed it to his wife.

"Well, Jo, last time they staged a silver panic to keep me from going. Now they're going to have a war!" was his acrid comment.

But Peary's was not a selfish nor narrow irritation. He knew only too well the demand war would make upon his own allegiance and how completely any Arctic hopes must be laid aside until all was over.

It was this same patriotic fervor that lay deep in his partly Gallic heart that in 1917 and 1918 paved the way for his untimely death. On March 9th, 1898, both Houses of Congress by an unanimous vote appropriated $50,000,000 for the national defense to be expended at the discretion of the President. Actual war was not declared until April 21. But by that time Peary had been through his fearful struggle of conscience and decided that, come what may, with his age of 42 years and his long preparation in the North the Polar task could still be justly put ahead of all others. The handful of loyal friends he retained in the Navy confirmed his belief by pointing out that the Civil Engineer's Corps could readily do without his services in the type of warfare bound to arise. Subsequent events proved the accuracy of this.

CHAPTER XIII

FROZEN FEET

A GODSPEED TO PEARY

By Richard le Gallienne

(Read at farewell banquet given to Peary by Herbert Bridgman, June 20, 1898.)

Peary, Godspeed!
I hardly know
The vast and intricate significance
Of all that snow
To which you go;
I only understand
A brave man dares again.
When heroes fight,
Who asks his trivial why,
So that they fight like heroes?

Maybe—it well may be!—
Peary shall find
Fauna and flora quite unknown to me,
And Polar secrets wrest
That shall unlock
Dependent secrets of the East and West;
But whatso science gain,
Or whatsoe'er accrues to commerce,
This I think is best:

The courage of the quest,
The fearless eyes,
The dauntless soul,
In them the Pole!

So that the Pole makes Peary,
As all such dreams
Have power to make a man,
I care not much that Peary find the Pole!
And perhaps the wish were kind
He ne'er may find
What with its finding
Means a dream at end,
For who so finds a dream,
Strange though it seem,
Must lose it as he finds—
'Tis so with dreams.

Peary, Godspeed!
We let you go
With hands that linger,
Hands proud to hold,
Reluctant hands to loose;
And I, an idle singer,
A recent friend of ancient admiration,
Would venture thus to bid you
A Godspeed full as kind
As those who longer
Have loved you, Peary,
Longer, maybe, and stronger,
But with no will more willing,
Peary, towards you—
Gentlest of all the strong,
Kindest of all the brave.

A writer of fiction would have to rack his brains to devise anything like the degree or number of misfortunes for his hero that befell Peary along the rough road of his life.

By the end of April, 1898, he had gathered his resources fairly well together and in most ways was ready to set sail. He had his ship and his leave. He had funds available. His men had been selected. Then one morning he received a cable: "Regret that machinists' strike in England prevents installation new engines in *Windward*." This meant that Northcliffe's ship would not have power enough to enter the ice; perhaps not even enough to take the party north. And with the limited bank account at Peary's disposal it was certain that no other vessel could be chartered in the short time remaining before the brief Arctic season closed. Besides, War had been declared, and the public was in no mood to listen to plans for an Arctic expedition.

Peary cabled back to send the *Windward* along anyway.

Then he turned his attention to the big bills that were coming in. He had devised a scheme whereby 25 affluent men and societies would be persuaded to contribute $1000 a year for four years. This would provide a cash capital of $100,000. But the strain of war on the benignity of the rich was too great for the success of the plan. By May 1st only eight had contributed. Hard work in the two succeeding months failed to double the number. So when the *Windward* crept into New York and was

finally stowed with her Arctic cargo there still was wanting an adequate sum to warrant her starting off.

But Peary had long ago ceased to feel hopeless in the face of penury. He had his ship and his equipment and his men: no power beyond actual armed force could stop him now.

The *Windward* backed out from her dock on Canal Street, New York, on July 4th, 1898. As the tide was running flood she had to use full speed ahead to hold her own, so weak were her engines. (Her speed was at the time rated at 3½ knots!) Presently the tide increased and she began to go astern—toward the Pole to be sure, but the wrong way to go. Luckily the pier was made again and the tide waited for.

Many exciting adventures were had with the ancient bark on her way north. Her total deck crew consisted of a Captain, two mates and four deckhands. As the members of Peary's expedition weren't seamen they could not help. When the anchor hove up every bit of steam in the boiler was required. As a result it was not safe to move unless tide were slack and all shipping clear. Through Melville Bay canvas again came into use and the voyagers managed to get across safely, though with several narrow escapes.

Going back to New York for a moment: Just before Peary sailed he received word that Nansen's old Captain, Otto Sverdrup, was leading a Norwegian expedition to Ellesmere Land and planned to base

near Cape Sabine. Once more, as in 1889, the name of Nansen brought a profound disappointment into the American explorer's life. For ever since the disastrous trip of 1895 Peary had been quietly assembling his ideas for working up the Ellesmere Land coast in preparation for a dash to the Pole.

He was now confronted with a very disagreeable situation. "If he gets there before me," he told Mr. Jesup, "he will of course have the ethical right to use my route towards the Pole. However, as I announced my plans over a year ago I need only arrive first to establish my claim to working there."

"Then why not do it?"

The exasperated Peary gritted his teeth. "Because the *Windward* will take many weeks to make the voyage north at her putrid speed. And I haven't any money to secure a faster ship."

Of course Sverdrup at his end was making all possible progress. But Peary refused to be bested. Finally he secured sufficient credit to charter a little auxiliary, The *Hope* of Newfoundland, which could carry a deck-load of coal north for him and lighten the *Windward* sufficiently to enable her to make full speed and have fuel for return a year later. The plan worked out happily enough, although the *Hope* was nipped in Melville Bay three times, and once nearly crushed.

As soon as the *Windward* reached Cape York Peary explained his plans to the natives. He told them that he wished about 20 drivers to join him with their families; and that he intended to winter as

far north as possible in order that he might travel by sledge out over the Polar Sea in the spring. He explained that he would use his ship at once for walrus hunting so that all would have plenty of meat for their families and dogs.

"Will you go with me?" he asked the assembled tribesmen.

There was much pow-wow around the *tupiks;* but finally old Merktoshar came forward and said: "We wish to talk it over, *Pearyaksoah.*"

They did talk it over, men, women and children throughout most of the night, although time was precious. But this was the first occasion that Peary had asked the tribe to leave its regular hunting grounds and cross to the other side of the channel. So he did not hurry them.

In the morning Merktoshar again came forward. He made his report: "We are afraid to go where we are not accustomed to hunt. But if you take us on the great ship and say that you will care for us and our families we shall go where you lead." Thus began at last the simple childlike faith among the natives that was to keep the ranks of Peary's drivers filled throughout the hard years to follow. One cannot appreciate the significance of this faith until one has seen how close to the brink of starvation the Eskimos live at all times. That they should let themselves be taken miles away from their seal and walrus grounds to a distant stretch of coast that they knew by tradition was one of the bleakest and least inhabited by the game upon which their lives de-

pended, stood for supreme trust in the white man's ability to lead them out again.

Peary did not even thank Merktoshar. He wished the decision to be taken as a matter of course. "Very well," he said. "Get your dogs and women aboard. We leave when the sun is again in the north." Four hours later the entire village of tents had been dismantled; 90 dogs and 38 Eskimos were taken aboard and the *Windward* headed for the upper reaches of Smith Sound with the lookout in the barrel overhead searching every pan for walrus.

After the *Hope* had shifted her coal off the native village of Etah the *Windward* put across towards tragic Cape Sabine. Almost at once she was caught in the trash ice and whirled about completely out of control. This happened during the last days of July. It was not until the 18th of August that the vessel staggered into a little patch of open water under Cape D'Urville, about 200 miles south of the Ellesmere Land bay at which Greely had wintered 15 years before. Meanwhile Sverdrup had established himself in Rice Strait behind Cape Sabine and less than forty miles below the *Windward*.

Thus we find the second period of Peary's northern work beginning under the most inauspicious of circumstances. He had crossed Smith Sound. He had natives with him: something other explorers had failed to achieve; and he had dogs. But his northing was only just past 79°, nearly 700 miles from the Pole. The natives didn't want to leave the ship. A competitor was in the field only a few miles away;

and a serious competitor at that, as Norwegians always are in polar work. The *Windward* ship was nearly crippled by her fight with the ice. And finally his men, as on the unfortunate 1894 trip, had lost much of their zeal for the north when they saw how narrowly annihilation by the pack had been missed, and how severe would be the life to come.

Another formidable aspect of the situation was the fact that from now on travel must be almost entirely over the sea ice. On the Ice-Cap, despite its frightful wind and cold, smooth going was the rule. Coastal sledging means one unending struggle over mountainous ice-jams that are formed by tide and current. On the Ice-Cap Peary had simply to grit his teeth and plug away. So long as he didn't freeze or starve, and held his course, all he had to do was to keep on lifting one foot after the other in order to reach his destination. Along the Ellesmere coast ten minutes of traveling on the level was a luxury that was stimulating. The average day consisted of a kind of exaggerated football game. Five hundred-pound sledge loads was the ball. Each driver carried, drove, pushed, and pulled his own. The opposing line was a serrated ridge of huge sharp ice fragments from ten to fifty feet high. And when by sheer strength and ice-axe this line was passed, there was always another just beyond. The enemy's tactics were varied by cunningly placed lanes of open water, the most dangerous trap in the North.

As soon as the *Windward* was fully beleaguered by the drifting ice provisions were landed ashore against

SEAMSTRESSES REWARDED.

Mrs. Peary distributing prized pots and pans to faithful native needleworkers.

the eventuality of her being crushed against the rocks that lined the coast. By the middle of September the temperature fell to 10° below zero and thick new ice formed all about the ship. Thus any hope of reaching even Greely's former base (at Fort Conger) further north had to be abandoned.

Now began another of the unique problems that Peary learned to face in this second period of his Arctic life. Hitherto he had always built a house for his small white party, and depended on the natives occupying the old stone igloos that are scattered up and down the Greenland coast. But the *Windward* took no lumber north for a Lodge. Also she had her crew aboard, which added to the number of white men that had to be kept in order and at work. The 40-odd native men, women and children had to be got ashore at the earliest possible moment because their presence aboard was dangerous to the health of all. Naturally the 90 dogs would go with them.

It was easy enough to tell the Eskimo drivers to go and shift for themselves. All could build good snow houses and good stone igloos. And since tribal organization made each family a separate and independent unit there was no question of authority. The trouble was that it was too late to build stone igloos. On the other hand, the snow did not prove right for snow igloos. And the several tons of walrus meat that had been collected on board for the dogs could not be divided equally without entering into the mathematics of just how many dogs there

were, qualified by the part the owner of each group played in each walrus hunt.

Merktoshar, the spokesman, explained all this to Peary at great length. "Why not let our women and children live here on the ship while we go on the land for musk-oxen?" concluded the native.

But at Peary's elbow were his white companions who declared hotly: "If you don't get those dirty Eskimos off the ship at once, sir, we'll take charge and get them off ourselves!"

"Which is mutiny," interpolated Peary.

"Not at all, sir. Only the preservation of common human sanitation."

Peary chuckled. One of the eye-witnesses to the incident says that his mirth was good to see. He suggested that the white man debate the matter with the Eskimo drivers first hand. The suggestion was carried into effect so far as attempting a parley was concerned. But the good-humored natives only grinned and gaped at the antics of the indignant and wholly unintelligible whites, and soon departed for the hills after game leaving their "dirty" families on board.

The whole situation seems comical at this distance, and the ill-feeling it caused all out of proportion to its importance. But one has only to consider that the *Windward*, which was no larger than a tugboat, had to be shut up pretty tight when the cold weather came. So when two-score odoriferous and vermined savages were added to the already over-crowded quarters the Leader's problems become more palpable.

Peary settled it all by joining the hunting party of natives. He knew the *Windward's* irate Captain and infuriated shipmates would see the hopelessness of the situation as soon as they had had time to think it over. And he knew further that they would not have the heart to put helpless women and children over the side without shelter. This seemed also to be the conclusion of the Eskimo men.

The outcome of the whole trouble confirmed the commonsense of Peary's intuition. Back in the fiords of Ellesmere Land four polar bears and twenty musk-oxen were killed within a few days. Walrus were found near the inner end of Buchanan Bay. All this luck was quite unexpected and temporarily disproved the native fear of famine, though later the same fear proved well-grounded. Like most good luck the present success swept away a multitude of other problems. As soon as the happy party reached the ship again there was much feasting and rejoicing among both races. Moreover, it soon turned out that a heavy gale that had occurred during the absence of the men had packed the snow about the ship sufficiently hard for igloo building. To the satisfaction of the white men a dozen igloos were started at once and within twenty-four hours the ship was clear of her unpopular passengers.

Now began the autumn sledging upon which depended the success of spring plans. Peary had intended to put his ship as far north as Sherard Osborne Fiord, on the northwest corner of Greenland and nearly 200 miles above his present position.

But having failed, he had now to advance his food and fuel to the shores of the Polar Sea by sledge in order that he might make a dash out over it in the spring.

Stories of heavy sledging have been told so many times as to be superfluous here. In former expeditions both British and Americans had dragged their own sledges. Peary's dogs were an innovation of doubtful value. But he was so handicapped by location of his base and so ambitious in the distances he insisted on covering that despite the dogs his struggles were even more dramatic than those of his predecessors.

"Peary never was tired," the natives said of him later. And: "Peary did not fear the wind or the thin ice, or the spirits of darkness as we did."

But fearlessness and ambition are of vital help only when there is a good basic plan. "I always figured out all the things that might happen and what I should do in each instance," he said of his preparations for a sledging trip. "Then I would pick out the least likely accident and prepare most against that very thing."

The scheme now was to relay loads of provisions 200 miles northward, as far as Fort Conger, Greely's headquarters in Lady Franklin Bay, during the autumn moons. Moonlight travel had not been the custom of former expeditions owing to the pale light, severe storms and bitter cold. But, like the sun, the Arctic moon rises in a huge helix above the horizon and rolls around unsetting so long as its declination

keeps it well above the equator. Thus for nearly two weeks each month in the arctic there is unbroken moonlight just as for a long period in the summer there is unbroken sunlight. Peary determined to take advantage of these moonlight periods to lay out a line of provisions and snow igloos northward. If he could establish a well-provided base at Cape Hecla before spring, that is, before the return of the sun, he could still make an attempt for the Pole despite the ship's failure to penetrate further north.

Early fall sledging enabled Peary to work out the basic figures of his forward movement. He found that three Eskimos were happier than two, and more easily handled by a white foreman than four. Also three natives and a white made a good party in a snow igloo. Igloos, he concluded, should be one day's march or about 15 miles apart. In good going there could be greater intervals; but with heavy loads he found it best not to overdo the dogs. The loads themselves could be about 500 lbs., exclusive of the spare clothing and harness of the driver. The only camp gear consisted of stove and gallon cooking pot for each unit.

In early November the expedition for the first time tried the new "Peary system" of advance which had been so carefully worked out on paper—and which ultimately, with very few modifications, enabled its inventor to reach the Pole itself. Peary soon found flaws in it; mostly ones, however, that had to do with the unique personalities of his native henchmen.

For instance, one morning Myah awoke in the igloo on the way to Conger and said: "I dreamed last night that there was much open water and rough ice ahead. I am going back." He did go back with two others.

Again the ice-foot, or shelf of fast ice which the tide leaves along the shore, proved to be a menace that the Ice-Cap did not possess. In one afternoon when dim moonlight was the only traveling light two sledges slid off the ice-foot and were crushed by their heavy loads which then had to be cached midway between two camps.

As the season advanced the temperatures fell to far below zero. In early December the thermometer registered 50° below, which was markedly colder than along the Greenland side at this time of the year. But, despite the cold and the lack of light, Peary pushed on around Cape after Cape until at the end of the November moon it looked as if the next traverse would take the main caches as far as the Greely house at Conger which had not been visited since its unhappy party had left it more than a decade before.

As was often the case in Peary's life, just when things looked brightest he was on the threshold of one of his worst catastrophes.

As the December moon rose on the 20th both sledges and equipment were in fine repair. Four good native drivers consented to make the trip north from the *Windward* to Conger although they admitted that the cold and wind would be bad. Furthermore, they confessed that more dogs had died

of late than Peary knew. There were now only about 30 animals surviving out of the original teams. However, a start was made with four teams, and four drivers, besides Henson and Peary. Head winds and heavy drift were soon encountered. It took nearly nine days to reach Cape Lawrence about halfway to Conger. Here Peary faced the necessity of turning back at once or of making a quick dash to Conger and there waiting the next moon. There were remaining only two days of the December lunar light; after that would come darkness, black and thick. The fateful decision was to press forward.

One good march was covered in the waning light. Then, abruptly, the ice-foot became impassable. A biting wind swept down out of Kennedy Channel, blinding the dogs and men. The party camped. Food was short. The native who had been with Peary in the United States for the past year proved so vitiated in health that he nearly froze. When the wind dropped the Leader and two natives pushed on, leaving Henson and the frost-bitten driver.

The light had gone completely now. It was impossible to pick a way among the fearful ridges of the sea ice. The ice-foot was more often a dreadful hazard than a help. The dogs often stumbled, and two died in their traces. There was no snow for an igloo that night. A rough shelter under an ice cake was improvised. Here one of the dogs of the party behind wandered in. This meant to Peary's mind that the natives might have gone off and left Henson. He therefore ordered one man to return with him and

bring Henson on. The native disobeyed orders and Peary attempted the job himself, though it turned out later that there was no need. The loose dog had simply gnawed his trace.

But this last loss of time brought to a head the disaster that had threatened from the moment the party left Cape Lawrence. As the fumbling drivers finally struggled up over the ice-foot at Conger, Peary realized that his cold feet had passed the point of conscious pain.

"At midnight of January 6th," his diary reads, "we were stumbling through the dilapidated door of Fort Conger. A little remaining oil enabled men, by the light of our sledge cooker, to find the old range and the stove; and, after some difficulty, fires were started in both. A suspicious 'wooden' feeling in the right foot led me to have my kamiks pulled off. I found, to my annoyance, that both feet were frosted."

As a matter of fact both his legs were in a partially frozen condition to his knees, though circulation was finally restored to the members with the exception of the toes.

The party was now snowbound, gale-bound, and penned in both by darkness and mid-winter cold, 200 miles from the ship. Its Leader's feet were about to loose eight toes by the dry gangrene of frozen flesh: all within two weeks of the time when it looked as if the Pole really might have been reached could a serious attack be launched.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PEARY ARCTIC CLUB IS BORN

AT the very moment Peary was lying in the darkness at Conger with his feet irretrievably frozen, there was occurring in New York, 3000 miles south of him, an event of the profoundest importance to his future. This was the formation of the Peary Arctic Club.

It is difficult to conceive a more hopeless state of affairs from every point of view than Peary's polar aspirations faced just after New Year's day, 1899: war scarcely ended; public opinion sharply against him; destitute, as always; and finally his crippled, almost desperate condition, in the sunless days of north Ellesmere Land.

It is a curious fact in the history of America that at critical moments in the progress of our country or its aspirations, there has always been a group of public minded men available to come forward and "see things through." This was true in 1776. It was true no less in January, 1899, when Peary had reached the limit of his ability to proceed alone. He was too deeply obligated, and had lost too much public support to proceed alone without extraneous help. He needed the assistance of a group of sympathetic men. And, as if by an act of Providence, this is exactly what he got.

The few who had answered the call for $1000 each for four years, and one or two others who were deeply interested but could not afford to give that sum, met for the first time at No. 44 Pine St., New York City, on January 29, 1899. Herbert Bridgman of the Brooklyn *Standard Union*, an old friend of Peary, laid before the meeting the plan of the current polar attempt, a summary of his arctic work to date, and his last letters which were brought back from Etah, Greenland, when the little *Hope* returned. The name "Peary Arctic Club" was adopted for the proposed association and a Constitution drawn up setting forth that

"the objects of the Club are to promote and encourage explorations of the Polar regions, as set forth in Lieutenant Peary's letters, and to assist him in securing additional information regarding the geography of the same; to receive and collect such objects of scientific interest or otherwise as may be obtainable through Lieutenant Peary's present expedition, or other expeditions of like nature; to receive, collect and keep on file narratives and manuscripts relative to Arctic explorations; to preserve such records and keep such accounts as may be necessary for the purpose of the association; and further, to command in its work the resources of mutual acquaintance and social intercourse."

The chief mission of the gathering was summed up in the words: "To reach the Farthest Northern Point on the Western Hemisphere; to Promote and Maintain Exploration of the Polar Regions."

Such names as Morris Jesup, John Flagler, Henry Parish and Henry Cannon were but a few of the noteworthy gathering of American citizens determined that America should win what so many other nations had so long been striving for. Others were Anton A. Raven, Herbert Bridgman, George Crocker, Lewis L. Delafield, James C. Colgate, Dr. Hermon C. Bumpus, Benjamin Strong and Zenas Crane.

Northcliffe became a member of the club by virtue of his gift of the *Windward.*

Mr. Morris K. Jesup was the first President of the Club and served in that capacity until his death in 1907, when General Hubbard took the office.

When the spring of 1899 came there was still lacking sufficient funds to effect the rescue of Peary in case he had lost his ship. Yet since the Sabine tragedy of Greely had occurred so few years before at a spot within a few miles of where Peary was basing, his friends deemed it wise to make contact with him if possible. Members of the Peary Arctic Club then reached down into their own pockets and contributed enough funds to charter the sealer *Diana* under Captain Sam Bartlett and placed her under the direction of Herbert Bridgman who was Secretary of the Club.

The *Diana* found Peary at Etah on August 12, 1899. There for the first time the grim details of the dreadful winter's story became known. As Peary was still something of a cripple, despite the fact that he had done a great deal of summer traveling, it was mildly suggested that he might like to return with the *Windward* which was scheduled to leave the Arctic.

"When my furlough has expired or I have reached the Pole I shall be ready to go," was Peary's prompt reply. His tone discouraged any reopening of the subject.

The Peary Arctic Club at once took charge of the material on board the *Windward* that had been rescued from the old Greely expedition base at Conger. As Peary was the first man to visit the tragic site after its abandonment many years before he felt deeply his responsibility in returning to proper authorities as much as possible of the records and property still there. So hurriedly and under such dire emergency had Greely left that very little had been originally taken to Cape Sabine. Despite the handicap any extra burden was to his plans, Peary rescued the scientific records and many of the personal effects of each officer and man of the entire expedition. These were now on the *Windward* and under charge of Mr. Bridgman.

On receipt of this unexpected material long thought lost General Greely wrote to Mr. Bridgman as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1900.

MY DEAR MR. BRIDGMAN:

I return herewith as requested receipt for certain articles left by me at Fort Conger, and brought there-

from through the personal efforts of Civil Engineer Robert E. Peary, U. S. N.

Permit me to express my sincere thanks for Mr. Peary's thoughtfulness in selecting, under conditions of physical distress to himself, articles in which he properly believed I would have the liveliest interest in connection with the members of my family. I cannot too strongly express my regret at the distressing physical injuries received by Mr. Peary in his journey to Fort Conger, and my admiration of the persistent courage and ability with which he has pursued his Arctic work not alone in previous years, but also on this particular occasion.

Thanking the Peary Arctic Club through you for its action in sending these articles to me,

I am, yours truly,

A. W. Greely.

Mr. H. L. Bridgman,
Secy., Peary Arctic Club.

In addition to the Greely relics Peary also was able to send back the following items of classic interest: the sextant abandoned in 1876 by Lieutenant, now the late Rear Admiral, Beaumont, Royal British Navy, at Cape Britannia, Greenland; copies of the Nares-Markham records from the cairns of Norman Lockyer and Washington Irving Island. Those of the Royal Navy were deposited through the Lords of the Admiralty in the Royal Navy Museum at Greenwich.

Thus the Club demonstrated its value early in its career. Not only had it materially assisted its protégé, Peary, but it had been of noteworthy

service to England and America in an historical way. That Peary had failed to achieve his goal did not arouse so much regret as his physical injuries did sympathy.

Once more, in 1900, the matter of a ship had to be faced. Expense threatened to run into many thousands of dollars, not only because of the several months required for the trip, but because of the racking effect of ice on a hull. Again the members of the Club joined together in generously contributing most of the necessary funds. The weak *Windward* had to be used as she cost nothing in the way of charter money. She had been repaired and improved so that she could make a respectable eight knots. Fine old Sam Bartlett went again as Skipper. And both Mrs. Peary and Marie Ahnighito went along to see their husband and father for the first time in many months.

The story of that voyage is told elsewhere. Suffice it to say that when the *Windward* reached the rendezvous at Etah, Peary had not been heard from for many months by the Eskimos. The ship then crossed to Cape Sabine. The disquieting story was learned that the explorer had gone north very early in the spring in the hope of reaching the Pole, but had not returned. The natives with him were also still away. Mrs. Peary took most of her comfort from this last fact. She knew that the Eskimos under her husband's leadership would likely set up an extemporaneous village somewhere north along the coast. The worst of it was that ice came in from

Smith Sound and nearly crushed the *Windward* against Little Pim Island. The *Proteus* had gone down hereabouts in a 30-minute pinch only a few years before. Naturally Captain Sam made the best escape he could into the cove behind Sabine. But the next thing he knew the *Windward* was floe-imprisoned for the winter.

Still again we find the unhappy Peary Arctic Club facing an emergency in the spring of 1901. The *Windward* with the ladies of the Peary family aboard had not returned. There was absolutely no word of what had happened to them or Peary. So far as the Club knew the *Windward* might have been lost on the trip north. The *Falcon* had foundered in 1896 in the little jump from New York to St. John's. Only those who have gone through the anxiety of such a blind situation as now confronted the patriotic Arctic enthusiasts in New York can understand the feeling of desperation that pervaded their frequent and anxious meetings.

Finally Bridgman was sent out again in July, 1901. He reached Etah on the *Erik* after a tempestuous voyage on August 5th. To the great relief of all aboard Peary and his family were found there safe aboard the *Windward*. He had made another noteworthy traverse northwards and brought back more valuable records of past explorers. But once more he steadfastly refused to return.

"Why should I," he said again, "when I haven't reached the Pole nor expended my furlough?"

This time the *Windward* was pretty well done in by

her hard winter and the rather informal engineering care from which she suffered at times. It was found necessary to re-engine her and install a complete set of new boilers on her return. It is important to follow all this expense and trouble that was had with ships because it was a problem soon to be solved in a unique way.

For the last time on the 1898–02 expedition the *Windward* left on July 20, 1902. Again Mrs. Peary and her daughter were aboard, both veterans with the natives and the North. On August 5th Peary was met at Cape Sabine where he revealed the fact that he had broken a world's record by having reached latitude 84°17′. Once more he had brought back a quantity of Army material from Conger including many instruments and papers.

The Peary Arctic Club had now reached a crisis in its affairs. Peary's long four years along the Ellesmere coast had been fraught with hazardous experiences and marred by unexpected hardship and suffering. There seemed absolutely no chance of his getting leave again. Moreover, public opinion had crystallized strongly against Arctic work. One of the mainstays of the Club wrote:

"The members having lost hope and faith, we are in a mood of masterly inactivity, if not actually moribund. Moreover, Peary's experience has definitely taught him that all which has been done, and particularly the tools with which it was done, were inadequate: that Greenland as a route and Etah as a base must be abandoned; that no steamer

exists equal to forcing Kennedy Channel and Lincoln Sea."

This condition and these facts were then the result of Peary's hard years in Greenland on the Ice-Cap, and far harder ones in Ellesmere Land along the coast. Neither the condition nor the facts were new: they were known and promulgated before Peary even went on his reconnaissance in 1886. Of course men were not sure about the insularity of Greenland until Peary actually crossed it. But they thought he was mistaken about its extending far towards the Pole. Thus, in addition to the Peary Arctic Club facing the failure of the man whom it backed, it suffered the "I-told-you so" derision of scores of critics who had claimed Peary was wrong all along.

In the following January, Peary wrote from Washington to the Peary Arctic Club:

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
January 11, 1903.

MY DEAR SIR:

Ever since my return from the North last fall, there has been an undercurrent of dissatisfaction in the Peary Arctic Club at letting the work of the Club drop before the Pole was attained.

Correspondence and discussion have now crystallized into the following condition.

I have told the Club that I am willing to throw myself into the work for two more years, and make a supreme effort which shall crown all past efforts with success, if I can have a suitable equipment, and by suitable equipment I mean a *first-class* ship, as

this is practically the only expensive item of equipment that I require.

I want no large pay roll, and no expensive and untried items of outfit. My Eskimos and my dogs cost practically nothing.

Given a ship of strength and power sufficient to land me with my party and supplies at or near Floeberg Beach, the *Alert's* winter quarters, I believe that I am justified in saying that I will answer for the rest.

What I propose is to purchase a strong hulled ship of some 350 to 400 tons net register, bring her to New York, have her heavily reenforced with bulkheads, struts and sheathing; put into her entirely new engines and boiler of about double the usual power, so that she can exert great pushing power; have trial trips to remedy any minor defects; and let her go north as an American ship and an exponent of American mechanical ability.

I estimate the cost of the work for the two years at $100,000. This is a modest estimate. Other expeditions have cost from $300,000 to $1,000,000.

At a meeting of the Club in New York last Friday some $30,000 were assured provided the entire amount can be raised; but it was not thought quite advisable to authorize me to go ahead and purchase my ship until more money was certain.

Another meeting of the Club is to be held on the 19th when the project will stand or fall.

In the meantime a strong effort is to be made to interest other gentlemen in the project. The idea of the present active members of the Club is to increase its membership to fifty gentlemen at $2,000, or one hundred at $1,000 and extend the range of the Club by recruiting from Philadelphia, Boston and Washington, as well as New York. Of course if

anyone (as has been the case with some members of the Club) wishes to put in more, so much the better.

In a nutshell the matter stands thus. I know that somewhere the money is waiting to do this work, and I know that between now and July, $100,000 or more can be raised.

But the crucial thing is to secure enough money for the purchase of the ship *now*. The time is at best none too long were she ordered this week.

I believe if assurances of $50,000 are forthcoming next Monday, the project will go through.

I am after five new members. Members of the Club are after others.

This letter is not one of solicitation, it rather offers an opportunity.

It is no figure of speech but cold fact to say that if I win out in this work the names of those who made the work possible will be kept through the coming centuries floating forever above the forgotten and submerged débris of our time and day.

The one thing that we remember of Ferdinand of Spain is that he sent Columbus to his life-work. The one thing we remember of Grinnell of New York, that he sent Kane to his great work.

Very sincerely,
R. E. PEARY.

In this vein he continued working on the members of the Club until the spring of the year following when, as always ultimately happened with his efforts, he succeeded. Under date of April 19, 1904, a legal Charter was taken out in New York for the Peary Arctic Club that repeated its original mission in the following words: "To aid and assist in forming and

maintaining certain expeditions to be placed under Commander Robert E. Peary, U. S. N., with the object of continuing his explorations of the Polar Regions. . . ." In other words, directly as a result of Peary's unceasing attack upon its listless attitude the Club had taken a new lease on life.

The Club's new enthusiasm was now directed toward two important goals: first, the altering of public opinion so that existing prejudice against Arctic work would be lessened; and second, the construction of a vessel that would place Peary and his party at a base on the shores of the Polar Sea. Both of these tasks required great talent and a lot of money. The effectiveness of Peary's rejuvenation of the Club may be gathered from the fact that within a month of the new charter, magazine and newspaper articles were appearing all over the country putting the new Arctic plans in the most favorable light possible. This work of propaganda was done with the greatest amount of finesse. No undue claims for scientific or commercial success were put forward; nor was there any maudlin emotionalism in the way people's interest was solicited in the broad geographical aspects of the work. As a result there seemed to be by the winter of 1904 a complete reversal of the public's estimate of the value and national prestige to be gained by discovery of the Pole.

Peary designed the new ship himself. Mr. Jesup and General Hubbard had each personally subscribed $50,000 for her with the proviso that Peary raise

funds for personnel and equipment. Roosevelt gave permission for his name to be used on the craft. Her keel was laid October 15, 1904, at Bucksport, Me., under the personal direction of Captain Charles B. Dix. Launching took place on March 23, 1905. Installation of machinery was carried out at Portland, Me., at once and under her own power the *Roosevelt* reached New York in July of that year.

Meanwhile the strain on Peary had been terrific. Not only did he have to help the faithful members of the Club keep others in thorough cooperation at all times, but Mr. Jesup's gift of money had carried with it the stipulation that Peary raise all the other funds required. It was at such times as this that Peary really suffered greater hardships than he did when actually engaged in his northern work.

From this point on it is easier to follow the work of Peary and his ship than it is that of the loyal little organization behind him. For instance, the matter of funds and of public opinion were never wholly disposed of even after the Pole was discovered. Peary had no capital of his own; and his expeditions always cost more than they looked as if they would before they left. Then there was the vast amount of political wrangling that came up when Peary wanted leave and when his advancement in rank was sought by his friends in 1912. Foreign scientific bodies had no agency to which they could go for full and accurate information about his achievements save the Peary Arctic Club. All through these crises, whether financial or political, or informative,

it was the Peary Arctic Club that arranged and directed whatever activity was necessary to meet the emergency.

The detailed administrative work of the Club was great. Peary single-handedly could not handle all the multitude of details regarding his personnel and ship. It also devolved largely upon the Club to assure salaries for those who were members of the last two expeditions. In addition, bonuses were paid to crew and assistants after the Pole was discovered. Such intimate tasks as were brought up by the death of Ross Marvin who was drowned in the Polar Sea in 1909 were handled by the Club. The *Roosevelt* was a continual complication in the matter of her docking, upkeep, insurance, engining, and so on. And before her it had been the *Windward.*

When the Polar Controversy arose in 1909–10 Peary could not often handle the extraordinary and embarrassing situations that arose because he was an "interested party" so to speak. It was the Peary Arctic Club that had to come forward to direct and control the proper sort of publicity necessary to preserve the dignity of the truth.

About this time there also arose a number of small but harassing claims by individuals and persons who had in some way or other contributed to the North Pole expedition expecting returns therefrom. Most of these claims were actuated by the false rumor, then widespread, that the government and others had paid Peary an immense bonus for his discovery. He thus became the object of a kind of petty black-

mail which he had neither the time nor the funds to handle. Records of the Club indicate the tact and firmness with which it met case after case of this sort.

One of the last acts of the Peary Arctic Club before it concluded its existence with the death of Peary himself was to record "with profound sorrow the demise in New York, May 22, 1914, of General Thomas H. Hubbard, its second president." Called to its leadership at a critical juncture he had sustained and directed its work with faith, patience, liberality; and without fear or compromise defended its success. Motives and ideals like those which inspired him, a young soldier of the Union, years before, had animated him throughout the Arctic quest. The attainment of the Pole was to him another glory for the flag he followed and the country he loved. The Club honored General Hubbard as an American patriot, not less than discoverer, of whom, as of old, it could be truly said:

> "The righteous man of purpose fixed and strong
> Scorns the depraved commands
> Of angry Faction clamoring for wrong,
> Nor fears the Despot's frown. . . .
> Unmoved he stands
> Erect amid the ruins of a world."

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF THE LAND

LET us now go back to Robert Peary up there at Conger in the darkness of the Polar midnight, January, 1899, food and fuel gone, both feet frozen, and sheltered only by the weatherbeaten little shack that Greely had left. It is the same Robert Peary whom young Maigaard had stood watching in silent wonder on the Ice-Cap in 1886; spiritually the same, for even in the darkness glowed the flame of Inspiration so that "as I lay there in the darkness sleepless because of my pain I made plans that would prevent sad thwarting of my advance parties as had just occurred."

"But your feet were frozen, Commander," protested young Bartlett, then first mate under his uncle, Capt. Sam Bartlett, later in the year. "Didn't it occur to you that the loss of the big toes cripples a man for life?"

"I did worry over that for a while, Bob," confessed the other, "but it seemed such a small trouble beside some of the others that I forgot it except when my wretched feet *wouldn't let me forget it.*"

One has only to suffer a superficially frosted finger or toe to know something of the physical tor-

ment the man went through after his doomed members had thawed out. Condemned as he was to lie there in bitter cold with only the smallest and most inadequate sort of first aid bandages and with no comfort save the Eskimo's candid assurances that he would lose both legs and die presently, the wonder of it was that he retained his sanity. Men have lost their reason for less torture than his.

Luckily there turned out to be food.

"Coffee from an open tin in the kitchen," he wrote in his later report, "and biscuit from the table in the men's room just as they had been dropped over fifteen years ago, furnished the menu for a simple but abundant lunch. A hasty search failing to discover matches, candles, lamps, or oil, we were forced to devise some kind of light very quickly. Half a bottle of olive oil, a saucer, and a bit of towel furnished the material for a small native lamp. This supplemented by pork and lard, furnished us light for several days."

There was nothing now to do but wait. Acute gangrene threatened Peary from the unspeakable condition of his feet. But his physical vigor and clean life defeated infection, and the gangrene was sufficiently localized by nature only to destroy the flesh that had actually been frozen solid. This saved Peary, but it confined him a writhing invalid for many days in the hut.

From an improvised cot he directed the work of his natives. So sure were the ignorant savages that their white leader's life was to be despaired of that

one of them spoke openly of returning south to the ship and their families. Peary knew of this but held them partly by sheer force of will, and partly by keeping up their childish interest in the old headquarters. He urged them to find food and clothing and other articles that might prove useful, though "searching for things in the unbroken darkness of the great Night with a tiny flicker of flame in a saucer was very like seeking a needle in a haystack."

Thanks to Peary's urging all the essentials were gradually located while scraps of wood were excavated from the surrounding snowdrifts for the fire kept burning in the tiny sheet-iron stove. The natives went out and brought in the dogs that had been left behind on Bellot Island, but several died before they got used to the old frozen salt pork which was all that was available to feed them. The same natives tried twice to succor the two men left out at Cape Cracroft, but were driven back both times by the darkness and furious winds. Finally, some ten days after leaving the dugout, they managed to reach it again, and found that the two castaways, after eating some of their dogs, had started for the ship on foot.

On February 14, 1899, the next moon climbed over the southern horizon and revealed a desolate scene. The small hut was so banked in by snow that its one exposed wall seemed only another boulder face jutting through the white expanse about it. Behind rose the rough snow-covered land towards the bleak mountains westward barely visible in the

faint light. Twelve gray shadows lying half buried before the low entrance represented the emaciated survivors of the original dog-teams. Eastward stretched a wild confusion of bergs and upended floes across the sea ice of Kennedy Channel towards the invisible coast of northern Greenland. Southward along the jagged and ice-tortured Ellesmere coast lay the long and almost impassable miles towards the ship. Temperature averaged daily between 58° and 65° below zero, Fahrenheit. Now and then a fur-clad Eskimo crept outside into the biting wind and drift and clawed around in the deep snow for another fragment of wood with which to feed the struggling fire. Within lay Peary, crippled and suffering; once more a failure at his task; baffled and destitute; yet, as ever, planning his next onslaught upon Nature's Fortress of the North.

By the 18th there was light enough from the moon and the growing twilight near noon, to make a day's march between the hours of darkness. Peary's feet and life were reasonably safe, but his toes were still ten open ulcers. He could not stand on them for a moment. Travel in such a condition would be an ordeal of the most exquisite agony. But the dying dogs, the half-frightened men, and the lack of necessary supplies left no course open but an attempted retreat to the ship. The Leader therefore had himself lashed to a sledge, his feet and legs wrapped in musk-ox skin, and the small weak caravan started. Fortunately the weather was perfect throughout the trip, though the thermometer

several times touched –65° F. And the natives, feeling that they were homeward bound, exerted themselves to the utmost; the entire distance of 250 miles was covered afoot by all but Peary in eleven days.

Captain Bartlett aboard the *Windward* recorded his impression of that return:

"How he ever stood the bumping over that rough ice is beyond me. Only those who have gone over similar roads can realize the suffering that he endured. We knew there was something wrong with him, but had no idea it was so serious. He had sent ahead a team of dogs with Eskimos and a note to the ship telling us that he was a little bit under the weather. I remember I was at the sea end of the road, leading through the ice foot when I heard the dogs in the distance. I waited until the party came along. Finally, Peary's sledge passed by and much to my surprise, he was lying on it. He greeted me in such a way that I felt everything was all right. So I got hold of the upstanders of the sledge and came along to the ship. Then I saw that there was something seriously wrong because the sledge had to be carried up to the gangway and he on it to his cabin on deck. On March 13th the toes were amputated. After a short time he began to hobble around on crutches, much against the wish of the surgeon who wished him to rest a while longer. Early in May he left the ship, going up Princess Marie Bay over the ice and onto the Grinnell Land Ice-Cap, crossing it to the west side. We did not see him again until August. His feet were in a terrible condition then. Flesh over the bones of his feet was bare and bleeding; for at this season of the year the surface of the

ice was shorn of all snow, leaving no cushion and nothing but the bare granulated ice to walk upon. This was not bad enough; he had to walk through pools and streams of icy water, which, of course, rendered his footgear soft as pulp. One can imagine with feet in that condition the terrible time Peary had. I asked him how he could stand it, but he only said: 'One can get used to anything'"

Chronologically the main plan, though delayed, went on rapidly under the renewed impetus of the Leader's direction. On February 28th he was carried aboard the *Windward*, a helpless cripple whom the surgeon said would never walk again without limping. Yet on March 3rd he started a native messenger across Smith Sound to the Eskimo settlement for more dogs and more drivers to take the place of those who had died or deserted. On the 5th he sent out a party of four hunters to get meat for his headquarters, for the crew of the *Windward*, and for his natives and his white assistants. On March 13th was held the formality of the final amputation of all his toes save a fraction of a little one on each foot. On March 31st more drivers and dogs came from the Greenland side in answer to their White Friend's call. On April 3rd Henson left with the new drivers and 35 dogs to move northward supplies left on the Ellesmere coast during the ill-fated December trip.

"On April 19th my left foot had healed (that is, ceased to drain) though it was still too weak and stiff from long disuse for me to move without

crutches. On this day I started for Conger with a party of ten, fifty dogs, and seven sledges loaded with dog-food and supplies. April 28th we reached Conger. May 4th I started for a reconnaissance of the Greenland northwest coast. . . . I found the bay filled with broken pack ice covered with snow almost thigh deep. Clear across to the Greenland shore, and up and down as far as the glass could reach, the channel was filled with upheaved floe fragments and covered with deep snow. In the end I gave up the Greenland trip for this season. And perhaps it was well that I did so, as the unhealed place on my right foot was beginning to break down. . . . May 23rd we started for the ship, (250 miles south), arriving May 29th. June 1st to 23rd was spent in sledging more supplies northward for the coming year's campaign. June 28th Henson was sent to Etah to communicate with a ship if it came. June 29th I started with two sledges and three natives to complete my survey of Princess Marie and Buchanan Bays. My feet, which I had been favoring (!) since my return from Conger were now in fair condition, only a small place on the right one remaining unhealed. . . ."

Nothing new lies in that summary; nor was anything especially great achieved during that spring. But it is worthy of note that, crippled as he was, Peary accomplished in four months as much as any previous expedition had in two years, including something like 2500 miles of sledging.

It is also interesting to record that he was later accused of "lying around and loafing" during most of the time he was north.

Peary rejoined the *Windward* on July 28. He was now in almost the same circumstances that he had been in the summer of 1895, four years before: he had been thwarted by ill-luck and bad weather, but had been able to advance his provisions towards his goal—in the present instance 14 tons on a line of caches reaching all the way to Conger. He was all set to succeed in the coming year. Yet he had to face a party of white assistants that were now wholly out of sympathy with his plans. Moreover, in addition to the regular party of co-explorers, he had a thoroughly sullen ship's company who could hardly wait to get out of their winter's prison. The natives alone were fairly content. They had had enough to eat most of the time; and while they had lost many dogs and had been driven nearly as hard as their teams by Peary's insatiable desire to travel, they had enjoyed hunting in a new land where they rarely dared to go.

After a week's tussle with the Sound ice the *Windward* was forced across to Etah where on August 12th she fell in with the *Diana*. Mr. Bridgman greeted Peary warmly. In a few minutes both were in enthusiastic discussion over the plans for the coming winter. As Bridgman was one of those who never once doubted that Peary would ultimately win, every step along the way thrilled him. After dinner he had a pipe with Captain Bob Bartlett.

"He told you about his feet, did he?" asked Bob.

"Not a word. What was there to tell?"

Bob spun the yarn of the lost toes. The Sur-

geon came up and added his technical advice to the skipper's picturesque account. "And he ought to go home and have the stumps fixed up if he wants to save his feet," declared the doctor. Mr. Bridgman was plainly horrified.

After nearly an hour the three decided that the only thing to do was to persuade the Leader to return with the ships and have Dr. Keen of Philadelphia trim the damaged pedal extremities into shape. "I'll fix it," announced Mr. Bridgman firmly and disappeared down the hatch toward Peary's cabin. He was gone about ten minutes. Presently he came plodding back up the ladder, his face a purplish shade.

"You fixed it, sir?" inquired Bartlett maliciously.

"Fixed it, *Hell!*" sputtered Bridgman. "Might as well talk to a stone wall!"

Secretly though, Bridgman was pleased. He only wished he hadn't been so rash in announcing his ability to persuade Peary to do anything the latter didn't want to do.

During the last week in August both the *Windward* and the *Diana* left, taking home Peary's party almost to a man. He was left with the following: a little hut of sod and scrap lumber at Cape Sabine; a smaller one at Etah; a line of caches between Sabine and Conger; a fresh but very limited supply of ammunition and fuel; a few delicacies for Christmas and Thanksgiving; a few score rather dubious Eskimo friends; and a pair of mutilated feet.

In his diary he wrote:

"After her (the ship's) departure the work before me presented itself as follows: to protect the provisions, construct our winter quarters, then begin building sledges, and grinding walrus meat for dog-pemmican for the spring campaign."

This sounds simple. It was, however, even to the initiated, a stupendous task. Take the geography of it alone. Etah is the native name for three holes in the ground—igloos—and means "the blow Hole of the Universe." From September until June the deep fiord there leading up to the inland ice is filled with an awful blast of whistling wind that penetrates the very marrow of him who faces it. Peary had to be left there because it was accessible to the relief ship.

To reach Cape Sabine on Ellesmere Land to the westward he had to sledge northward about thirty miles, then across 25 miles of torn Sound ice. As evidence of the going it took Hayes a month to cross this ice.

The hut at Cape Sabine was situated in one of the most wretched and desolate spots on the globe. Here, as at Etah, the wind whistled down almost unceasingly. There was no vegetation, save a few pitiful arctic shrubs and grasses in the rock crevices during late July and early August. (The tree line is nearly 900 miles south.) The sea ice ground night and day with mournful groans against the rocky shore and tide-foot. Gaunt skeletons of granite hills rose abruptly behind the place, except where frost had left steep talus slopes of rocky rubbish around

their bases. Perennial snowdrifts cut white gashes here and there. And above and around it all one heard the weird sigh of the invisible wind.

"Sometimes the natives, men as well as women, can stand it no longer and burst abruptly into a kind of hysteria known like the dog disease as *piblockto*," he wrote. Of his own periods of mental depression and discouragement through which he went he penned only an occasional line such as: "It took quite a grip today not to give way to despair."

The sun left Etah on the 18th of October, not to return until the 11th of March. In that autumn of 1899 Peary planned his second great campaign towards the Pole along the Ellesmere coast. By late February he had his divisions of Eskimos assembled, his teams replenished, meat for man and dog collected and dried, and enough drivers willing to work for him ready to start for Sabine.

Heavy weather prevented the advance parties from getting away until March. At this time while the sunlight is a matter of but a few hours, the twilight lasts at least half the day. But the cold is intense and the wind often unbearable. By the middle of March Peary and nearly all of his teams had reached Cape d'Urville in Ellesmere Land near where the *Windward* had wintered in the previous year. Bitter cold, wind, and an accident to one Eskimo slowed things up, but Peary was in no mood to tarry. This might be his last chance at the Pole—if his feet lasted long enough to give him a chance. And he had to

make the most of what supplies he had cached on the way.

The next 200 miles up the coast to Conger were the same as usual: head wind and drift and rough ice that shattered sledges and killed dogs. The sledges became heavier instead of lighter because the caches had to be robbed to help the Polar Sea trip due later.

It must be remembered that it was 90 miles from Conger on north to Cape Hecla, the jumping-off point from which 500 miles of Polar Sea travel had to be made before the Pole was reached.

The spectacle of Peary even contemplating such an incredible task under the circumstances fills one with awe, not just for his indomitable courage, but for the superb power of abstract human will when pitted against a cruel Nature.

Conger was reached March 28th, 24 days from Etah, of which six were stormbound; or an average of over 20 miles per day.

"The process of breaking in the tendons and muscles of my feet to their new relations and the callousing of the amputation scars had been disagreeable," he austerely admits in his diary. "But I felt I had no reason to complain."

He didn't complain as a rule, so long as he could travel. But now he was later than he had planned. More dogs had died than he had hoped against. Native promises to follow the final 90 miles to the Polar Sea had weakened among his best men. It

was the old story: after two years of heart-breaking labor he was in a strategic position to strike for the Pole, and now circumstances combined to baffle him again.

But Peary had become a wary campaigner by this time. He still had the north of Greenland as a card up his sleeve. That continent had not yet been positively determined in latitude. Lockwood and Brainard far from encircled its northern end in 1882; Peary, Lee and Henson in 1895 had not been able to see the extent of the unknown territory beyond them northward. As Peary put it when he faced the necessity of deciding what to do in this newest moment of failure:

"If, on the other hand, I chose the Greenland route and found it impossible to proceed northward over the pack (that is, in an attempt for the Pole), I still had an unknown coast to exploit and the opportunity of doing valuable work. Later developments showed my decision to be a fortunate one."

So the northern march was given up. On April 9th, seven sledges turned eastward across Kennedy Channel. The story of the ensuing journey around the north end of the Greenland continent is laconically told in Peary's book *Nearest the Pole*. It is one more of the great epic stories of exploration. There is the usual thread of hardship and disaster running through it: cold, storm, disheartened Eskimos, vile going over torn ice fields, dying dogs,

hunger-stricken men, smashed sledges, and tormenting vagaries of a geography unknown to man. Besides Peary, the party soon narrowed down to the faithful Henson, one native and 16 dogs. Lockwood's record was recovered on May 8th. Thenceforward the coast still trended northward. Not far beyond the end of the land was reached. Says Peary: "And when we came within view of the next point ahead I felt that my eyes rested at last upon the Arctic *Ultima Thule*." He named it Cape Morris K. Jesup. A bear and an arctic hare were killed, enabling the march to continue. The ice northward was in a fearful condition, jammed and broken into mountainous ridges, apparently driven with remorseless pressure upon this northern extremity of Greenland. The party traveled out a little ways just to try it, and reached latitude 83° 50′ North. This sight indicated that the land breadth between the spot reached in 1895 and the upper edge of the continent was about 100 miles.

It is noteworthy that at this high point on the sea ice a wide lead of open water showed just beyond to the northward. We shall hear more of this lead which was to play an important part in Peary's life for the next nine years.

Back on the land the eastward march was once more extended by the fortuitous appearance of musk-oxen. Finally the coast trended sharply southeast. The end of the land had been rounded: Greenland was at least absolutely defined with an accuracy that left no doubt about its northern extension.

Condition of the dogs made return imperative. So a cairn was erected and this record placed in it:

(Copy of Record in Cairn at Clarence Wyckoff Island)

Arrived here at 10:30 P.M. May 20th from Etah via Fort Conger, and north end of Greenland. Left Etah March 4th. Left Conger April 15th. Arrived north end of Greenland May 13th. Reached point on sea-ice latitude 83° 50′ N. May 16th.

On arrival here had rations for one more march southward. Two days dense fog had held me here. Am now starting back.

With me are my men, Matthew Henson; Ahngmalokto, an Eskimo; sixteen dogs and three sledges.

This journey has been made under the auspices of and with funds furnished by the Peary Arctic Club of New York City.

The membership of the Club comprises: Morris K. Jesup, Henry W. Cannon, Herbert L. Bridgman, John Flagler, E. C. Benedict, James J. Hill, H. H. Benedict, Fred'k E. Hyde, E. W. Bliss, H. H. Sands, J. M. Constable, C. F. Wyckoff, E. G. Wyckoff, Chas. P. Daly, Henry Parish, A. S. Raven, G. B. Schley, E. B. Thomas, and others.

R. E. Peary,
Civil Engineer, U.S.N.

CHAPTER XVI

BACK TO THE STONE AGE

WE now reach what to the average man must be the unique and enthralling period of Peary's life. *He never wrote the story himself.* None can tell it all firsthand. It has been pieced together here from his laconic but careful notes, and from the memories of his Eskimos upon whose minds it was indelibly engraved.

He reached Conger on June 10th, 1900. This was not his base in the sense that he had food and supplies, and the usual equipment luxuries of northern life there. It was his base only in the sense that there he must stay with his few loyal natives and eke out an existence until his ship came. Or, if his ship did not come by the ice keeping her back, he must escape to the south with all speed possible lest his party be completely lost. At the time of his arrival this was out of the question. Open water cut off all avenues of escape. Not until the dark months of late autumn could sledging parties retreat south. Even then it would be dangerous owing to the fall gales.

"But if we do escape southward," argued Peary in his private notes, "that will mean relinquishing

an attempt on the Pole next spring." In other words, there would not be time to do 300 miles of hard escaping, and then get ready for 1400 miles of traveling to the Pole and back. Thus he hit upon the daring plan of living off the country at Conger, and gathering sufficient food and skins (for clothing), to make the 500-mile dash to the Pole from there early the following spring.

He does not record the profound doubts he must have had as to keeping the party together that long. It is true that other men have accepted similar circumstances with stoic hearts when forced to do so. But other men have not always had to keep with them a band of thoroughly homesick Eskimos as Peary did. Yet, he did it. And, as it turned out, after an interminable winter of living off the country, living as the first men must have lived forty centuries ago, he actually made a serious attempt to reach the Pole: again keeping the promise he had given to those who, believing in him, had backed him to the limit.

His first move after his daring decision was to scatter the party. The country behind Discovery Harbor is cut up into rolling and mountainous land on which graze a few widely scattered groups of musk-oxen. Also there are a few hare and caribou. By attending first of all to this most obvious game it was possible to secure enough meat to live on during the summer, and to provide skins to take the place of those quite shredded by the hard spring trip.

The exhausted dogs had to be nursed along for a

few days by resting them completely and feeding them seals killed on the sea-ice before the camp. A few walrus were got at the same time, an important addition because of the ivory tusks, which were needed for harpoons. Another indispensable kill was that of two *oogshooks* or hooded seals, from the hide of which sole leather and whip lashes were cured. No other skin in the North is satisfactory. As no narwhal were seen it was necessary to eke out thread from the scanty stock on hand until musk-ox or caribou tendon were available.

In July parties reached Lake Hazen in the interior, and combed the district along the Ruggles River and into the mountains as far west as Greely Fiord. Those at the main camp at Conger spent as much time on the sea-ice as possible for the game to be got there. Peary had after many years' experience learned the native lesson that when the weather is good and there are many mouths to feed, the first necessity is meat. Eskimo hunting methods were used almost exclusively. The little ammunition left had to be conserved for the fast traveling of the following spring, when time could not be wasted on stalking. In the case of the sea animals the native system was very effective.

Both seal and walrus sleep on the ice in the sunlit months. The former are very nervous at all times due to continual hunting of their arch-enemy the polar bear. They are secured by the natives in two ways. Either the hunter makes no effort at concealment, walking boldly within 300 yards of

his quarry, then lying down and crawling forward; or a small sledge is built having a white sail just large enough to conceal the man behind it. By pushing this in front an Eskimo can approach close enough to harpoon the animal. The former method, that of imitation, is by far the more artistic. It requires that the native duplicate the seal's movements of raising his head, looking about, rolling over, and scratching with his flipper.

Long practice in the previous years had enabled Peary to do all this nearly as well as his brown friends. And being an expert shot, he never used more than one round whenever he chose to expend some of his precious ammunition on an extra large seal. Walrus were not so easy to secure because they were so much larger and tougher. It will be remembered that Nansen and Johansen shot a number of walrus when they found themselves compelled to winter alone in Spitzbergen after their remarkable trip over the Polar Sea. But their case was simply one of preserving life, whereas with Peary it was a matter of preparing for the next year's work as well. So he not only could not use firearms, but he had to lay in several tons of meat to keep his teams in shape throughout the winter.

Two kayaks were built at Conger. Frames were of bits of wood found about the hut and then covered with the green skins of seals. But there was not sufficient time to use them extensively; and the small amount of open water discouraged

making any more. Also their workmanship was not good due to the haste in their manufacture. Peary himself nearly drowned about July 15th while skirting the coast in one. The few walrus that were killed were called to the edge of the ice by imitating the bellow of the bull leader, which brought the herd in through curiosity. When the animals were within twenty feet of the ice-pan a victim was selected and harpooned. By taking a turn of the line around an ice pinnacle or one of the killing irons driven in the ice, it was possible to hold the animal until it could be dispatched with a lance.

The inland hunting was a good deal more complicated for various reasons. In the first place the practically complete lack of vegetation prevented any sort of cover in the vast rolling plateaus where musk-ox and caribou were found. It was therefore necessary to sight the game with binoculars and approach it carefully from leeward. Dirty brown and gray colors of the skin clothing that both Peary and his men wore at all times made a protective coloration that helped greatly.

In the case of musk-oxen it was customary for a few dogs to be unleashed in order to round up the herd. But here again time was an essential factor. If the herd were small or nervous dogs only served to frighten the animals into a long run towards another grazing ground. This proved the case towards the western side of Ellesmere Land where the wolves which prey on grazing

animals were more numerous. Moreover, the musk-ox is like the walrus in that its vulnerable spots are small and anatomically well protected. So although some of them were choked by native lariat or stabbed with killing iron, most of those got were shot. Meat thus obtained was delicious fare, though not comparable in quantity to that got by walrus and seal hunts. However, the skins of musk-ox and caribou were indispensable for boots and overshirts, and for sleeping skins in cold weather. Gear that had been taken from Etah earlier in the year was now worn out. Unless it were replaced future traveling was absolutely out of the question.

Preparation of hides before they could be used was nearly as vital a matter as securing them. In all cases they had to be removed promptly from the carcass, scraped and tied to protect them from the dogs and from rotting. Then in camp they had to be scraped again and thoroughly dried in the sun or the wind. After that they were well chewed by the natives in order to remove all excess fat in the texture of the hide. If any part were left oily it would freeze solid in low temperatures.

Sealskins for the indispensable whips and lashes had to be worked over and strung among the rocks with even greater care in order to secure the exact pliability that was required. Harness strips and traces had to be treated about the same as skins meant for clothing. During the hungry winter

KAYAK.

Skin boat with seal hide float behind its Eskimo owner.

months the dogs had gnawed away most of the original supply of both.

A whole volume could be written on this phase of the new life Peary had chosen to lead in order that he might start from Conger in the following spring.

Everything took twice the time these days that it usually took owing to the fact that almost every detail of equipment was that of the primitive man. Travel with the patched sledges meant frequent breakdowns when the fragments of wood from the hut were the only repair material and had to be lashed in with painstaking care. The few tools available had mostly been lost or broken. New whipstocks had to be fashioned from splinters off an old boat railing that was found on the beach. Harpoons that had been lost or left behind were replaced with new weapons improvised from walrus tusks and scraps of wood lashed together.

To serve as an example of what Peary's life was like in those days the author can quote from his own diary written fourteen years later on a visit to Peary's makeshift base at Cape Sabine, 200 miles south of Conger:

"Today Etukeshuk harpooned a large walrus. The walrus sank when shot, taking with it head, line, shaft, drag, and the float which was defective. We were stormbound in Peary's old shanty just afterward. I was awakened by a terrific crashing and hammering on the wall. Etukeshuk had a large rock—I could just lift it—with which he was tear-

ing a two-by-four timber from the ceiling. With my tiny camp axe he hewed out of it a harpoon shaft. From the tusk of a fresh-killed walrus he fashioned a long point of ivory and lashed it through holes he found in the shaft. For a drill he had only a thong bow and an old iron nail. He shuffled around over the rocks and found an old broken spade which he said he had buried two years before. From this hard steel he cut a small rectangle. Sounds easy, but it took four hours, using the same small axe and hammering with a heavy stone. After every two or three blows he was compelled to file a new edge on the axe. He sat up the entire night boring two holes in the steel. Then he filed a double edge and lashed the blade in place, finishing the harpoon at the end of about fourteen hours' steady labor."

So works the toolless savage.

During Peary's hunting trips small tents of sealskin modeled after the native tupik were utilized. Spare time for every man was taken up in sewing and other small work to keep the much patched gear in order. At every opportunity dead grass was collected from sheltered nooks between the rocks. This was to be used in the coming cold weather as an insulating layer between the foot and the ground. As matches were scarce the flint and steel of the older Eskimos were often brought into use. Even native games of tag and bone throwing were resorted to when playtime came.

Through it all Peary hoped against hope that

his ship might make its way up through the broken ice and leave him the equipment and supplies that he so craved. This had been the instruction he had given Bridgman the year before. But both knew that the plan was an uncertain one as no skipper would be willing to take his ship beyond Cape Sabine unless the ice had completely cleared out—something that doesn't happen but two or three times a century.

By September it was evident that any hopes of the ship must be given up. The winter would be spent absolutely on the party's ability to live off the country. Considerable meat had been collected so far; but most of it had already disappeared down the ravenous maws of the dogs. So with the first of the deep autumn snows all hands were up and away as far as possible into the interior after sufficient food to carry through the dark months. Peary himself led one outfit including Henson and four Eskimos to Lake Hazen. The temperatures were already around zero and the savage fall winds had commenced. But the men were in fine condition and eager for action. By the first week in October 100 musk-oxen had been killed and most of the meat started towards the hut. And when the full darkness came both skins and meat were cached within reach of the party. But owing to the great labor of bringing the loads clear to Conger Peary ultimately saved his dogs and men by erecting snow igloos near where each kill had been made. Then when all

meat had been consumed the party would move on to the next cache.

For over four months this mode of life continued. Peary suffered off and on from a ferocious toothache for which there seemed no remedy. He records that he did not have time to suffer from loneliness although a lonelier existence than he lived in those four black, bleak, bitter months is difficult to imagine. He was ever busy about plans for the spring dash Poleward; and there was the never-absent necessity of keeping his Eskimos in such fettle that they dared risk the Almighty Devil's wrath by staying north and helping their white leader.

Even at this the winter was a far harder one for the Eskimos than all the courage and resourcefulness in the world could help. At the last moment, after months of scheming and hoping, the spokesman for the natives came forward and announced that with the coming of spring he and his tribesmen were going south. Only one boy demurred, and boldly proclaimed he would stick by the white man. So on April 5th, Peary for the third time on this expedition, started for the Pole accompanied by Henson and one Eskimo, two sledges and twelve dogs. It was a pitiful caravan. The men were gaunt and the dogs underfed. All were traveling on their nerve. It would have been easy to characterize the whole proceeding as the act of a madman who had mesmerized two weak fools into following him. On

the same day the remainder of the natives, six in all, with two sledges and seven miserable dogs left for the south. They told Peary goodbye, and frankly added that he would never see them again for the good and simple reason that he would never get back!

The effort, brave as it was almost to the point of foolhardiness, could not but fail. The miles soon told on both men and dogs. At Lincoln Bay with the Polar Sea beckoning just ahead the strength of all failed nearly simultaneously. "As it was evident to me that the condition of men and dogs was such as to negative the possibility of reaching the Pole, I turned back," is all that Peary wrote about this third tragic failure: the more tragic because of the nine months of hardship and deprivation that had been endured in order that the effort might be made.

Back at Conger again he found the men who had deserted him. They had been stopped by open water and had to return lest they starve. Three weeks later another attempt was made. This time a small relief party of Eskimos was met en route. Providence must have had a twinge of conscience for all the suffering and misfortune Peary had suffered. For the first news was that his wife and daughter were at Payer Harbor, Cape Sabine, on the *Windward*. The heroic Josephine had come north in the previous summer to leave supplies and mail. But when the ship had been unable to reach Conger, and the

Eskimos could give only the vaguest tales about where her husband was, she insisted on staying north.

It is not an exaggeration to point out that here again Josephine Peary played a large part in the ultimate discovery of the Pole. It was her personal presence at this low ebb in Peary's plans that did much to put him back on his feet. Three of his four years that had been available to him for northern work were now expended. In the first year his polar effort had cost him his toes. In the second, having been forced to relinquish his polar hopes, he had rounded Greenland as a makeshift alternative. In the third he had broken all precedent by living off the country and starting Poleward for the third time, only to be foiled by physical weakness of men and dogs. And now, depleted in strength, deserted by the Eskimos, and with only the merest shreds of equipment remaining, his plight was a sorry one. So like a ray of divine sunshine through the clouds of his despair came the word that his beloved Josephine was in the North.

Yet the spiritual stalemate of life proved no impediment to material plans. "After a few days' rest the work of establishing new caches along the coast northward toward Conger was commenced and continued until the middle of June," wrote Peary within forty-eight hours after he had rejoined his family, whom he had not seen since 1898. (This was May, 1901.) Aside from any

considerations of sentiment, one cannot but pause at the spectacle of such prodigious tenacity in Peary's laying caches down that weary route along which he had been suffering for three solid years.

In August, the *Erik* appeared. She had been sent up by the Peary Arctic Club who had expected the *Windward* with Mrs. Peary back the previous autumn. Another tragedy was feared at home. Both ships were now used to get walrus meat for the Eskimos. They had deserted Peary, but Peary would not desert them. As a result, their response was good. When fall came and he settled in the hut at Cape Sabine he found several families willing to stay with him, thus assuring him drivers and seamstresses for the winter.

"But the Almighty Devil was angry that we joined Peary again, to help the White Men travel across the great ice," Alakasingwah, one of the survivors, told the writer.

Peary only said: "Soon after this (September 16th) my Eskimos began to sicken. By November 19th, six of them were dead."

It was a kind of dysentery that appeared in epidemic form. Death strikes terror to the heart of the native. Peary could do nothing. There was no doctor, the expedition surgeon having gone home. Just around the corner was the Greely camp of death. Those who did not die were too weak to hunt. Only a few years ago the writer found the bodies of two of the victims wedged down between the boulders near the shore. Clothing

had not been removed from the mummified remains. Continues Peary: "During this time I personally sledged much of the material from Erik Harbor (where the ship had been forced to dump her provisions) to headquarters (Sabine)." The fire of his Inspiration would not let him rest.

And soon through the long black winter with one white companion, one black companion (Henson), and a handful of frightened Eskimos who for the time had lost their faith in Peary's ability to beat the Almighty Devil.

When the January moon came only three native drivers were available. They were willing to help sledge loads towards Conger but they refused to think of going on the Polar Sea beyond. "It is clear to us that we should never return alive if we try again to go out on the great sea-ice," they told Peary.

"But it is the same ice as we travel over along the coast. And if there is food enough for you and the dogs why should you refuse?" he argued.

"That is what you told us last year and the year before; and the year before that. But each year it is the same. You start. The Almighty Devil freezes your feet. You go again. He nearly starves you and Ahmmahlakto, bringing great storms to kill your dogs as well. Then you go again. You are caught by open water and ice that is thrown high into the sky. It was kind of the Almighty Devil that you escaped. Now you go again. This time he will not be so kind. You

will die. Already a number of our own people have died because we dared stay here with you."

No amount of persuasion would change them. Peary did not become angry. He perceived the power of Eskimo superstition. "My one chance was to go and to prove to them that in a pinch I was bigger than their confounded Devil after all!" he said afterward.

Towards Conger snow igloos were built along the old trail, one by one. The slender food and fuel supply—mostly blubber—was slowly moved northward. The same old weary miles were gone over again and again. There was no luxury when a party returned to the base. It was still a case of living off the country because the little that the *Erik* had been able to leave had to be conserved for an emergency.

On March 3, 1902, Peary's fourth and last polar effort on this expedition was finally ready. As usual, he wrote a few letters to be given to the ship in case he did not return. One said:

"I seem to have reached the end of the lane. What I gained in Greenland I am losing in Ellesmere Land. Soon they will call me a fake, say I am just hoarding what I can mint from the public's credulity. Yet, would it profit me to confess that all my savings, all of my wife's savings, all that I can beg, borrow or steal, have gone into the quite inadequate equipment I have gathered for the next attempt?"

CHAPTER XVII

THE TIDE TURNS

BEFORE March 10, 1902, Peary reached Conger for the fourth time in 12 marches from Sabine, 300 miles to the south. Here he held a parley with his men and disputed with them again the relative strength of the white man's magic as compared with the brown man's vindictive Devil. This parley consumed the better part of four days. Seven Eskimos refused to be convinced. Peary did not condemn them. He explained his disappointment that they should be so faint-hearted and declared that he should go a long ways out on the Great Ice (the Polar Sea) and return to reward richly those few who had stuck by him.

On the morning of March 24th the Polar party started. The natives in it nearly gave up when a furious gale crashed down upon the sledges as the third cape was rounded. But Peary's iron will once more prevailed.

In the northern end of Kennedy Channel open water was found. This had been the experience of the other years. And each time Peary had blamed his luck. Little did he realize that not only his growing intimacy with the shoreline, but this very

handicap of prevalent open water at special seasons, were to prove an incalculable advantage in the years to come.

Ensuing weeks contained nothing new as regards straight sledging. At Cape Hecla the little caravan swung straight out northward over the mountainous pressure ridges of the Polar Sea itself. The snow was deep and the going frightful. Yet the pack was less evil than that seen north of Greenland two years before. Apparently this was the road to the Pole, if any existed. The party had been in the field a month now, having covered over 400 miles in temperatures around –60°. Yet the main struggle, the second 400 miles and back over the Polar Sea, was just beginning.

All through April the four natives with Peary and Henson plodded on. A wide lead of open water, the Grand Canal as Peary called it, held them up about the middle of the month. Two of the Eskimos were sent back to save food. This lead apparently was the same as that sighted off North Greenland at Cape Morris Jesup. It was destined in the future several times to play its part in Peary's life.

Finally the two Eskimos gave in. Most of the dogs showed that they could not keep up the killing work. Snow and rough ice did not improve.

In his diary Peary wrote:

"April 21, 1902. The game is off. My dream of sixteen years is ended. It cleared during the

night and we got under way this morning. Deep snow. Two small old floes. Then came another region of old rubble and deep snow. A survey from the top of a pinnacle showed this extending north, east and west, as far as could be seen. The two old floes, over which we had just come, are the only ones in sight. It is impracticable, and I gave the order to camp. I have made the best fight, I know. I believe it has been a good one. But I cannot accomplish the impossible."

He had reached 84° 17′. This was a record for the western hemisphere, but a long ways from the Pole; 343 sea miles to be exact.

The return was hard. But Peary was too numb with the misery of his four years' failure to mind the suffering. There were several hairbreadth escapes near the Big Lead and along the icefoot. But danger meant nothing when four years of agony had gone into the debacle it all meant. Food gave out; dogs died; the natives grew panicky; and things looked very black. But nothing could be blacker than to have sunk four years of life and ten of strength into an effort of dismal futility.

Knowing the scarcity of funds at home Peary had his party spend the summer gathering meat in case the ship did not come. But on the 5th of August, 1902, the *Windward* hove in sight. The first face Peary recognized at the rail was the shining one of his Josephine. She seemed to know how much he needed her in this melancholy hour when he must

leave his hopes and dreams, as he thought, forever.

In the fall of 1903 Peary reported for duty again in his professional status. Much water had flowed under the bridge since he had last visited the Navy Department in Washington. One of the first things he noticed was that much of the palpable resentment at his absence and at his soliciting of outside influence had disappeared. So little news had come from him and there had been so little notoriety about his work that little attention was paid to him. His professional brothers of the sea had begun to forget him.

"I felt as if I had wandered back like a lost cat," was the way he put it. There was also a depressing sensation in the fact that two grades of promotion were due. Peary was not the man to take what he had not earned. It galled him to study for a few weeks and move from Lieutenant to Commander by virtue of an examination alone. Yet it galled others more that he, the freebooter, could now take his place with men who, like him, were in their late forties (he was 46), but who had stuck by their job and become known in the Navy. Only seniority had moved Peary. The very fact that there was not harsh complaint about his long absence was a silent reproof.

He was detailed to duty in the Bureau of Yards and Docks in the Navy Department. He had been so long out of touch with routine work that for a while he must trail after his juniors. He soon

saw why there was no outspoken criticism of past contretemps. He was simply looked upon as a man who, like other men, had had a big idea in his youth. His idea had possessed a deal of virility; and so had led him to do the foolish things that young men do. Only in his case do them for a great deal longer time. Of course he had failed, as many young men with wild ideas do fail. But he had gone on so long, and his idea had involved so much complexity, that he had suffered a great deal of mental and physical anguish. Moreover, by the "game fight" he had put up across the Greenland Ice-Cap years before, he had shown that he had good stuff in him. His was a faded romance, a broken bubble, an exploded theory: he a fanatic to be pitied more than derided.

Thus the older officers were content to ignore Peary with an indulgence of would-be kindliness; and the younger ones to look upon him with a sort of curiosity mixed with incredulity. Certainly he was a weather-beaten individual, a fact that appealed to their imaginations. But almost no one took him seriously any more about the North. Not even his closest friends in the Peary Arctic Club, many of whom agreed with the member who said: "I told you, Bridgman, that the British proved a generation ago that the Pole couldn't be reached through Kennedy Channel. Why should we throw good money after bad by letting Peary try that way again?"

But Peary was not a man to sulk, or stay in a

daze; nor had he spent sixteen years of his life thinking about the housing and comfort of men for nothing. He soon showed the Navy Department that he could think two worth-while thoughts to anyone else's one when it came to caring for personnel. Such an impression he made on the Chief of Bureau that he was sent abroad in December, 1902, as the President of a Naval Commission to study European types of barracks. His report was one of the finest papers of its sort ever written.

But Fate has its own way of interlocking the lives of men. For during that very month Robert Falcon Scott on his *Discovery* expedition to the Antarctic was leading his starving frost-bitten party over the great southern ice-cap to a new record of 82° 15′ South. And naval London, during Peary's visit, was in a fever of suspense awaiting news of the absent heroes. This touch, slight as it was, brought back in a rush to Peary all the old madness. Again the flame of his Inspiration burned with a luminance that threw all else of life into a shadow.

New Year's Day Peary was back in Washington at his desk in the Navy Department. But the voyage home had crystallized the thoughts in his mind. He secretly decided to begin at once active solicitation for his next expedition. Through the eyes of a contemporary we see him now working more methodically toward his goal. He had not only become physically hardened by the bitter lashing of the northern blizzard, but spiritually

steeled by the constant stress of human buffeting. He had grown more conservative in his claims, but more fulsome in his support of them. He knew better than to start a violent movement for leave or for financial support. Experience had taught him *finesse*. He was less talkative, but also almost dogmatic in the grim and unswerving candor of his statements when he chose to make them. The few lectures he gave were not successful. His audience found the "weatherbeaten fanatic," as the press termed him, somewhat disturbing. His realism took the romance out of his theme. Yet he could not bring himself for a moment to relinquish it. For, as Bridgman put it, "he believed that the Pole could be attained, and that he could attain it, though openly he told no one so. He had cleared the field and the stronghold; the fortress and the only possible road to it. For the first time in retrospect he saw clearly revealed that all gone before was but courageous guesswork and experiment. What was more inevitable than that he should be eager to reap the harvest which he had sowed?"

He was perplexed for a while as to how he should begin. The Navy was certainly indifferent, if not inhospitable. There was no money in sight. The Peary Arctic Club had practically given up the ghost. And finally, he poignantly realized that further effort would be futile without a proper ship.

He began by sending a masterful letter to the few men whom he thought might retain some shreds of faith in his ultimate ability to win the Pole. Some of the recipients of this letter replied in terms of regret that business kept them out of such matters now. Others warmly advised Peary against further waste of time and money on a hopeless enterprise. A good many did not reply at all.

One of the most hopeful prospects had been Mr. Henry Bryant, President of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences who had been so helpful on the early Greenland expeditions and so very kind to Mrs. Peary during her husband's long absence ending in 1902. Under date of January 11th, 1903, Peary sent Mr. Bryant a copy of the letter he was circulating in hope of stirring up action in favor of another polar trip. In forwarding it he said:

"I know you will accept or decline the proposition which I present herewith in the same spirit in which I write. I believe it is no ordinary opportunity that is offered you of associating yourself with a great accomplishment. If for personal or patriotic motives, or both, you decide to accept, it will be very gratifying to me. If you decide to decline, so be it."

Just about this time Mr. Bridgman, Mr. Jesup and Mr. John Flagler, who had never lost heart, seemed to take fire with Peary over the idea of a

ship built especially for the penetration of Robeson Channel. These gentlemen met and decided that if membership in the Peary Arctic Club could be increased there was a good chance of securing funds for a Club ship that Peary might use.

Then, to Peary's dismay, several of those he most counted on backed out completely, one being Mr. Bryant. Peary's letter to Bryant acknowledging the bad news throws so much light on the whole situation that it is worth quoting in full:

2014 Twelfth Street, N.W.,
Washington, D. C.
January 17, 1903.

My dear Bryant,

Yours received. I am sorry that a matter of opinion is to keep you out of the enlarged Peary Club. You have been so long more or less deeply interested in and connected with my Arctic efforts that it would have been very gratifying to me to have you in at the finish.

The thing is certainly going through.

I agree with you in a way, in what you say of the drift method. I recognize fully its possibilities. I could show you in one of my notebooks of about 1899 or 1900 a scheme for a drift through the polar Basin from some point northwest of Bering Strait.

But this method has several objections.

First, it takes too long (five years at least).

Second, it is in no way fitted for a man of my temperament who can endure almost anything as long as he feels that his own exertions will have

some bearing upon the final result; but who would fret himself to death if he were a helpless piece of flotsam, dependent upon the whim of winds and currents, and powerless to work out his own salvation.

Third, it has always seemed a peculiar thing to me that neither Nansen nor Sverdrup has ever moved to repeat his attempt. If the method is such a certainty, why with their experience do they not try it again, and do the thing. You know as well as I that the talk of having secured all the scientific information that is desirable, and not considering the Pole alone of any especial value, is all rot. You and I are no longer chickens, and we both know that no man would give a few facts of so-called scientific information the slightest weight, if balanced against the Pole.

As to the Franz-Joseph land route, Abruzzi's plucky success, which missed by a hair's breadth being a complete catastrophe, has made people forget that there has been as equally long a list of failures there as by the Smith Sound route. Further I believe Abruzzi's accomplishment marks the limit by that route.

As for my own attempts I have been handicapped by an unsuitable ship, and a compulsory start from bases in fatally low latitudes.

With a suitable ship (and I will not start without such a one) I believe I can get her as far North as the *Polaris*, the *Alert*, the *Discovery* and the *Proteus*, and with a base at or near the 83rd parallel, I believe I can make another sledge journey equally as long as the four I have already made.

As to the scientific information which may be secured by an expedition via Smith Sound, as compared with one on the opposite side of the

Pole, I differ *in toto* from you and Sir Clements Markham.

Where there is land and water, there is double the field for new or additional information than there is where there is only water.

The unknown coast from Independence Bay to Cape Bismarck can be reached from the upper end of Robeson Channel, and its delineation alone would be a worthy object for an expedition.

Soundings in the Polar Basin north of Greenland and Grinnell Land, will be not of equal but of greater value than soundings on the opposite side of the Pole.

To put the matter broadly yet with perfect truth and justice, the head of Robeson Channel is the center from which all the remaining links (the Pole, soundings in the Polar Basin, the Eastern Gap in the Greenland Coast, and the Western Gap in the Grinnell Land Coast) necessary to make Arctic exploration a finished job, can be reached and welded.

Personally I am not in sympathy with the feeling which leads to the abandonment of one route and the trial of another because of failure to achieve complete success; nor with the tendency of Sir Clements and his friends, now that he is interested in Antarctic matters, to claim that there is nothing more to be gained in the Arctic.

I believe in finishing the first cherry before biting at the next one.

Thanks for your suggestion as to Mr. Cramp, but as he is a contractor, a great portion of whose work is for the Navy Department, I should hesitate to approach him on this matter.

With best regards, believe me, as ever,

Very sincerely,

R. E. PEARY.

To this letter Mr. Bryant replied in a way that characterized many of the other replies. He said:

MY DEAR CAPTAIN PEARY:

My delay in answering your letter of January 17th has not been owing to indifference; but because I was turning over the matter in my mind. Your letter is a strong presentation of the merits of the Smith Sound Route, and breathes the proper spirit of a leader who believes in himself and his cause. I must confess, however, after hearing your lecture and reading your article in *McClure's* —in both of which the physical obstacles you had to overcome were treated with modest candor—I am more than ever impressed with the almost insuperable obstacles to be overcome by anyone attacking the Pole over the shifting floe ice and open leads which characterize the region north of Cape Hecla (i.e., the Polar Sea). To put the matter briefly in my humble opinion, the chances of success are not promising even under your experienced and resolute leadership.

This exchange was characteristic of the voluminous correspondence that now grew up between Peary and the various men whom he thought might be won over to support a fresh attack on the Pole. In all cases he argued his point with masterful poise, rarely giving way to the impetuous desire to wring the necks of those who seemed so stupidly averse to such an obvious assurance of success. But he had played his tune for many years by

now, and few were willing even to stop on their busy way and listen.

For a year this sort of thing went on. Duty in the Navy Department dragged along. Foreign detail and a station on the West Coast again loomed in the offing. He felt that if he were ordered far away he was doomed. He redoubled his efforts. He clutched at a straw. One of the few faithful ones suggested that the Club be incorporated with a new charter and more specific ideas in view. This was done under date of April 19, 1904.

Then came the great moment when $100,000 dropped out of the sky, so to speak. Mr. Morris K. Jesup and Mr. Thomas Hubbard each agreed to give $50,000 for a ship if Peary would see to raising money for the expedition proper.

In July, in Mr. Jesup's cottage at Bar Harbor met the owner, Commander Peary, Mr. Delafield, (counsel for Mr. Jesup) and Captain Charles B. Dix. As Mr. Jesup's gift was given with the stipulation that not less than $50,000 be raised by the Club itself, and since construction of the ship must begin at once for her to be ready to go north in the succeeding year, the situation was a delicate one. The extra money to be raised by the Club was necessary in order to assure payment for shipbuilding. Captain Dix, the builder, finally took the risk into his own hands and agreed to start work at once. A month later at the same meeting place Mr. Colgate of New York came forward with a

check for $12,000 which finally made up the necessary funds. Not only was this money a happy deliverance from a disagreeable quandary, but as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Judge Darling, was present, it showed him the spirit of public approval in a way that made additional furlough for Peary a possibility.

The keel of the new ship was laid on October 15, 1904. Peary designed her, taking as his reference models such famous northern ships as the *Fram*, *Bear*, *Thetis*, *Proteus*, *Discovery* and *Terra Nova*. He profited by the mistakes in each; and he determined to anticipate the hazards his ship would encounter in the heavy ice of upper Kennedy Channel.

President Roosevelt graciously permitted the vessel to be named after him. The *Roosevelt* was a powerful steamer, with all the engine force she could contain. She was fitted with masts and small fore and aft sails to take advantage of favoring winds, and to provide locomotion in case the ice nipped her propeller off, a contingency she met on her first voyage.

Her hull was of unique design and construction. Its strength had to be such that it would resist the terrific pressure of the ice-floes, and at the same time keep its shape intact until the lifting of the ship bodily released the pressure. Nansen's experience in the Polar Sea with the *Fram* showed that it was a practicable idea to plan for the actual lifting of a ship by ice pressure. Also there were the

tragedies of the *Polaris* and the *Jeannette* to remember, both of which had been pinched by the ice. Since neither could lift free they had been cut to bits by the crushing floes.

The great departure in the *Roosevelt* was in the unusual power of her engines. Most other Arctic ships had been auxiliary sailing vessels, counting on their power only when wind failed. Peary counted on his engines to drive him through the ice fields whenever opportunity to forge ahead arose, and on the strength of his ship to withstand the punishment she must receive in the process. Yet the *Roosevelt* was little larger than an ocean-going tug. Her length at the water-line was only 166 feet; beam 35 feet. Her registered gross tonnage was 614 tons. She was built at Bucksport, Maine, under the direction of some of the greatest small ship-builders of all times. She was launched on the 23rd of March, 1905. Machinery was installed at Portland, Maine, and in two months she was on her way to New York to take on cargo for Peary's final voyages.

The tide had turned at last, and now was running strong flood.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STARVATION PARTY

PEARY'S story now speeds up. In July, 1905 he sailed from New York in the *Roosevelt*. The third period of his life was now on. In the first he had made his Ice-Cap struggle. In the second he had crawled up and down the Ellesmere Land coast. He now launched his startling scheme to force his ship to the very shores of the Polar Sea and bring her back safely. Other ships had been as far north; but their movements had always been without sure knowledge of ice conditions; and if they did reach high altitudes it was only by a whim of fate in permitting them to take advantage of an open season. When, as with the Greely party, the ice was so slack as to tempt them beyond the average season floe-line the expedition was usually caught.

It was Peary's idea that by proper knowledge of ice and sea conditions a ship could be driven every year, if need be, to the shores of the Polar Sea and kept there while sledge parties made their essay northward over the pack. Another radical change in his technique over those of former expeditions was his system of work on a unit basis. Logistics of his units were as perfect as mathematical reason could

make them. A unit comprised one man, one sledge, one team of dogs. With this plan of campaign he hoped to work outward on the Polar Sea exclusively after having placed his ship almost as high as he ever so far had been able to reach by sledges.

We have in this plan one of the most perfect examples of the value of experience it is possible to imagine. *Peary was forty-nine and a failure.* Yet he had gained the potential knowledge that was about to enable him to do what men for 400 years had been failing to do. It was his intimate knowledge of ice and current conditions, of coastal marks and peculiarities, north of Cape Sabine that made it feasible for him to drive a ship through the ice and fog that perennially besets the narrow channel between Greenland and Ellesmere Land. From both sides of this channel he had been observing year after year that under certain combinations of wind and tide acting over limited combinations of shoal and deep, the ice jam suffered itself to be ripped and split until slender black leads of open water strung here and there between the Polar Sea and Smith Sound. Peary determined to take advantage of his hard-won knowledge of the position of these leads.

The Skipper of the brand new *Roosevelt* was Captain Robert A. Bartlett, who now replaced his uncle, Captain Sam. "Cap'n Bob," as he is widely known, was then but thirty years of age; one of the generations of Bartletts who had fished down the Labrador and over the Grand Banks for upward of a century. His home was in Newfoundland, though he later

WINTER QUARTERS.

Roosevelt in polar pack at Cape Sheridan, winter of 1905–06.

became naturalized and is now a Lieutenant-Commander in the United States Naval Reserve. He commanded a transport during the post-war period. He had been First Mate under Captain Sam Bartlett in the old *Windward* in 1898–02.

Of course Matthew Henson went along again. Like Captain Bob, he had been on the 1898–02 trips; and, in addition, he had known and worked with Peary since 1884 when the Nicaragua campaign was breaking in the explorer. Moreover, his presence on the early Ice-Cap expeditions had given him a superior knowledge of the natives and their habits. He was nearly as good a dog driver as an Eskimo, and could take care of himself under any Arctic conditions.

As usual the other members were connected with the ship save for the Surgeon, Dr. L. J. Wolf, and Peary's two assistants, Clark and Marvin. Since the Ice-Cap fiasco in 1895 Peary had consistently avoided large parties. One or two men upon whom he could rely as leaders of a group of natives were all that he required. The crew of the ship were mostly raw Newfoundlanders who were used to long hard winters in their native land or down the Labrador. They needed only a plentiful supply of tobacco, two square meals a day, and a good warm living space to make them comfortable during the polar night. Had they been forced to follow some special routine or succumb to the dictates of a fancy and theoretical régime common to most exploring parties they would no doubt have succumbed long before

the winter was over. Peary knew his men and made them feel at home as much as possible. That there were notable exceptions, such as Bob Bartlett and Boatswain Murphy, both of whom did much sledging, was all the more to the credit of the latter.

There was the usual run of minor excitements on the northern voyage. The ship caught fire; fog and bergs were encountered in the Straits of Belle Isle; smuggled liquor aboard made some of the seamen drunk; and so on. But Peary and Bartlett had been through all this sort of thing so many times before that their personal records are taken up almost entirely with the problem of the great ice fight ahead.

The usual routine was carried out at Cape York and beyond while passing through the Eskimo country. "I'll never be back," Peary had told his friends among the natives when he left in 1902. "Oh, yes you will!" they retorted. "You always do come back." And here he was not only back, but with a big ship as well.

"I need twenty drivers," said Peary, after the greetings and holding up his two hands as well as indicating his toes in the native fashion. "This time I shall put the Big Ship at the edge of the Great Ice beyond *Nugsuak* (Conger) and travel north in the days just before the sun comes back."

But the Eskimos shook their heads. Too many hard times had been survived at Conger in the years before and they knew how tenaciously the white man held on when once he started northward.

But Peary had counted on this very difficulty. He

knew his brown children of the north as if they had been his own. He ordered a huge tarpaulin taken off a bulky pile forward. Revealed before the natives was as fine a pile of precious sledge wood as they had ever seen. New and longer knives than had ever been brought north were unwrapped and handed to the admiring hunters to handle. Harpoon shafts of spruce, rifles, ammunition in unlimited quantities, extra whaleboats, and a score of other articles that cannot be secured in Eskimo Land were flashed before their sparkling eyes. "It is too bad that you will not go with me," observed Peary calmly, "because some of the men further up the coast who will receive these gifts for working with me will be glad that you were afraid to go."

Ten minutes later the entire male population of Cape York entreated their white friend to take them with him. He took his pick of them.

By midnight of August 16, 200 dogs and 40 Eskimos, men, women and children were aboard with their hunting gear and prepared to winter on the shore of the Polar Sea. That night the *Roosevelt* got her first real ice test.

"The heavy pack surging down Smith Sound," wrote Peary, "gave me an opportunity to see what good work the ship could do as we bored through toward Cape Sabine. To our delight deep and heavy as she was, she rose on the opposing ice without pronounced shock, no matter how viciously she was driven to it, and either split it with the impact, or wedged it aside by sheer weight."

The story of the ensuing fight during the following two weeks has already elsewhere been told. Suffice it to say that never was a ship put to a test for which she had been deliberately built so successfully as was the *Roosevelt*. Once the leads led eastward clear to the Greenland side. But when the ship got across a west wind sprang up and slid the whole twenty-mile wide pack across at her. She was driven smashingly against the ice-foot. A craft more frail would have been crushed to splinters. Twice she was forced aground by the ice, and her false keel dragged over the sharp granite rocks that line that portion of the coast. Through it all she staunchly withstood every effort of the Almighty Devil to end the voyage then and there. The Eskimos were terrified.

Finally, on the 5th of September, Cape Union was rounded and Peary found himself with ship and equipment intact at a point 300 miles beyond his late base of supplies; a point which it had taken him many weeks to reach each time he struggled north on his last expedition.

"With my feelings of relief came a glow of satisfaction that by a hard-fought struggle we had successfully negotiated the narrow, ice-encumbered waters which form the American gateway, and route to the Pole; had distanced our predecessors; and had substantiated my prophecy to the Club that with a suitable ship, the attainment of a base on the north shore of Grant Land was feasible almost every year."

The usual story of the long winter night continued much the same as in previous years, save that a new thrill came with the polar pack's frequent offensives against the little ship that had dared moor among the floes. Time after time the *Roosevelt* was lifted bodily by the pressure. But each time she slid easily from the clutches of the ice. On Christmas day a curious phenomenon occurred when the main pack opened northward leaving calm open water between the ship and the Pole for as far as the eye could penetrate the darkness. The frightened Eskimos dashed ashore, and the white men made preparations for moving into the box house that had been constructed on the beach in case the *Roosevelt* were lost. But when the flood tide brought back the ice the staunch hull stood the attack, and once more froze in solidly among the "growlers."

On February 19th the first advance party left for the real campaign, followed closely by various others. The rendezvous was Cape Hecla, three short marches to the west. From this headland the route lay straight northward over the broken Polar pack-ice 490 miles to the Pole itself.

It must be remembered that the Polar Sea is roughly 2000 miles in diameter. Cape Hecla, like the northern ends of Spitzbergen, and Greenland, is one of the projecting points from which an expedition need cover only about 490 miles to reach the apex of the earth. But this 490 miles is over the most frightful going that it is possible to imagine. Pressure of wind and tide are continually driving

the main 40-foot-thick pack against the land and shoals that surround the sea. In this way mountainous ice ridges are formed. These ridges gradually wear and melt down over a period of centuries. But as they are continually being formed the surface of the sea-ice is a vast tumbled plain of ice fragments, some of which are the size of a small house. In 1914 the writer sledging out over the Polar Sea with MacMillan just to the westward of Peary's route found pressure ridges miles long and nearly 100 feet in height. Through these ridges a road had to be hewn for the dogs and sledges. But since the fragments that made them were so huge the work was always both heavy and tedious.

The saving grace of the Polar Sea is the frozen-over lead. The same pressure that makes the ridge also makes the open lane or lead of open water. In very low temperatures these leads freeze over quickly and the going over them becomes level. Few such level areas are found near the land where the continual warfare between beach and floe makes the débris almost continuous for many miles outward.

By February 22, 1906, Peary had gathered at Cape Hecla one hundred and twenty dogs and twenty-one Eskimos. Besides himself, Henson and Marvin, Captain Bartlett and Dr. Wolf had volunteered to lead parties of natives. The idea of advance and supporting parties that had been developed along the Ellesmere Land coast was put into effect at once. This enabled teams and men in the rear to work out

over a broken trail, and so conserve their strength for the supreme test.

The actual take-off was Point Moss, just beyond Cape Hecla. Peary got away on March 2nd, just a month earlier than he had been able to make in 1902. Not only was this a great advantage in time available, but dogs and men were fresh. The actual distance to be covered scarcely more than half that which had been faced from Sabine. The sun was visible for a few moments over the southern mountains as the creaking sledges worked out over the fast shore ice. "Was it a good omen?" thought Peary, and concluded it must be.

"The battle is on at last. We are straightened out on the ice of the Polar Sea heading direct for our goal," he wrote in his diary that night. Even then he did not realize what a heart-breaking battle it was to be.

As a man he made an interesting picture there in the arctic dawn: fifty years of age; tall, very thin as usual with the stress of anxious months of waiting and planning, broken only by one hard trip after another; face drawn by the bitter cold and deeply lined with the equally bitter years that had gone before; silent, for there was naught to say that would help—all having been said many months before; yet ever keenly observant of the way each man wielded his whip or each dog pulled. He did not suffer much from the cold because he had learned from his native friends how to protect himself. But he realized that the white men who had gen-

erously joined him during the earlier laps were suffering.

For two weeks the march continued out over the broken ice. With each mile the Leader's strain of responsibility increased.

"Though I fight against it continuously," he wrote, "I find it impossible under conditions like today (better going at last!) not to indulge in some thoughts of success as I tramp along, and I get so impatient that I do not want to stop at the igloos, but keep right on and on. At night I can hardly sleep waiting for the dogs to get rested sufficiently to start again. Then I think what will be the effect if some insuperable obstacle, open water, absolutely impossible ice, or an enormous fall of snow knock me out now when everything looks so encouraging? Will it break my heart? Or will it simply numb me into insensibility? And then I think, what's the odds, in two months at the longest the agony will be over, and I shall know one way or the other. Then, whichever way it turns out, before the leaves fall I shall be back on Eagle Island again, going over the well-known places with Jo and the children, and listening to the birds, the wind in the trees, and the sound of lapping waves. (Do such things really exist on this frozen planet?)"

On March 26th was reached the region of leads—the Grand Canal or Big Lead, as Peary had come to call the wide cracks he had seen in practically the same latitude off the north end of Greenland and in 1902 on his polar march. There was nothing to do but wait. By noon the lead partially closed and

froze the rest of the day. The sledges dashed across. Two marches further on a wider lead was met. More maddening delay. The temperature ranged from 59° to 66° below zero F., but the fresh breeze kept the salt water from freezing solid enough to cross. Seven days were thus lost. On April 2 the final crossing was made.

Now came the real dash poleward. Going improved as the land was left behind. This was logical because the polar pack far out comes less in contact with the land. Then came the inevitable wind.

"Will it never end?" reads the Leader's journal plaintively. "The wind and drift continue with unabated violence. For some three hours today I pushed and butted, and at times almost crawled on hands and knees back and forth across the small floe on which we are camped. This is partly for exercise; partly because I could no longer keep quiet; partly from a desire to determine with certainty whether if I were made of sterner stuff I might not be traveling."

After six days the gale abated and the journey went on.

One by one the supporting parties were sent back. The weaker dogs were weeded out. But,

"Finally," the diary goes on, "as I looked at the drawn faces of my comrades, the skeleton figures of my few remaining dogs, at my nearly empty sledges, and remembered the drifting ice over which we had come, and the unknown quantity of the 'Big Lead' between us and the nearest land, I felt that I had cut

the margin as narrow as could reasonably be expected. I told my men we should turn back from here."

The date was April 21st, 1906. The latitude was 87° 06′ N. Once more Robert Peary had failed; this time only 174 miles from his goal.

The back trail came now, far harder than the out trail because of the fact that incentive had gone and the shadow of failure had again cast its gloom upon the Leader. Soon the natives reported that those in front could no longer find the sledge marks. The trail had been drifted over. And where it hadn't been drifted over the leads that had opened in the storm had faulted it so widely that the new trail could not be picked up.

Here it was that the natives, who had never been out of sight of land before, somehow got the idea that they had drifted west. Peary's sights had put him far to the eastward. Also he alone realized the true relation of the reduced rations to the distance yet to be covered. There was just one chance to which he could pin his hope for the party's escape from starvation: that was to reach the North Greenland shore and find musk-oxen before his men and dogs succumbed.

At this critical juncture the Big Lead was met again: a half mile of black water running east and west as far as the eye could reach. This spelled death if it did not close or freeze. Yet there was no wind to close it; and the temperatures were too

high to freeze it rapidly. Dogs were eaten. Sledges were broken up to cook them.

Several days later the starving party found thin rubber ice stretching to the opposite shore.

"No time was lost," Peary described it, "hurrying to the place where it was evident to us all that now was our chance or never. We put on our snowshoes, with which each man could be supported for a moment or so in the same spot."

As they crossed

"there was a cry from someone in the line, the words sprang from me of themselves: 'God help him, which one is it?' But I dared not take my eyes from the steady even gliding of my snowshoes, and the fascination of the glassy swell at the toes of them."

Two miles of it! (The writer once crossed two hundred yards of polar sea rubber ice and the horror of it still sticks!)

"During this march and part of the next," reads the diary, "we stumbled desperately southward through this frozen Hades, constantly falling and receiving uncomfortable bruises. My uncushioned stumps (where the toes had been frozen off) seemed to catch it especially, and it is no exaggeration to say that at our first camp my jaws were actually aching from the viciousness with which I had repeatedly ground my teeth together during the march."

The starving party struggled on and on, the Eskimos thinking they were far to the west off Grant Land, while the Leader knew they were above the northern end of Greenland far east of the ship. Peary finally recognized Cape Neumeyer which he had passed in 1900. He saved the party by this bit of recognition. For he saw just to one side of the Cape a low pasturing ground where he felt the chance of finding musk-oxen was good. And he was right. Not only did the party shoot a hare within a few minutes of their weak crawling up over the ice-foot, but traces of the bigger game were found shortly afterward. "I sent two men after musk-oxen *with an exhausted dog for rations*," from the record shows how low food was. These men came back unsuccessful. But six more hare saved the party from death.

Then came the dispute about which way to go to get to the *Roosevelt*. The natives wanted to go east, directly away from the ship. Peary finally prevailed upon them to follow him west, as we have noted in our first chapter. All literally crawled along the ice-foot in their weakness, much the same as Henson, Lee and Peary had crawled down off the Ice-Cap in 1895. Then the first musk-oxen were shot and the men were safe. Peary himself shot them. He was too weak to open fire when first he came within range. He had to rest for a moment and catch his breath.

"I kicked off my snow-shoes and sat down upon them for a moment to pull myself together. In that

moment there passed before me all the weary days since we went on scant rations; the grim daily grind; the dismal waiting at the Styx for a chance to regain the world; the heart-breaking work through the shattered ice; the infernal groaning and crashing of the floes; the ever-present nightmare of more open water; the incessant gnawing under the belt; the bruised and aching feet; the burning eyes and face; the growing weakness; the tantalizing mouthfuls of hare since we reached the land; and always this hope and picture before me, waking or sleeping, —a herd of musk-oxen that should once more permit us to eat our fill. . . ."

And so on to the kill and the warm red flesh again that men and dogs had craved for many weaks. Yet even this supply gave out later on the long march west; and the diet of dogs had to be taken up again. Within sight of the ship by telescope the party was so weak that one of the three remaining dogs was killed and eaten.

Finally, Peary and his exhausted men dragged themselves in. He had failed again. Days later he wrote:

"To think after all the preparation, the experience, the effort, the strain, the chances taken, and the wearing of myself and party to the last inch, what a little journey it is on the map, and how far short of my hopes it fell. To think that I have failed once more; that I shall never have a chance to win again. . . ."

The poignant bitterness of the words brings a pang to the heart of one who has followed our man through in his other failures.

A failure at fifty: the pity of it!

Yet he wasn't a full failure by other men's standards; only by his own. His own standard was "*all or none.*"

Two weeks Peary stayed aboard to recuperate. About forty-odd dogs had survived the spring trip. With these and such of the natives as were willing again to travel he organized a party to explore westward along the northern edge of Grant Land. He covered the coast to Eureka Sound which Sverdrup had just discovered working from the south, and crossed to Cape Thomas Hubbard where he left two cairns and records. The latter were recovered by MacMillan and the writer in 1914.

Meanwhile the ship had broken loose in a gale and was jammed by the ice. She ran ashore. When Peary reached her near the end of July she was in a precarious position. Incidentally, his physical condition was nearly as low once more as it had been after the Polar Sea trip. Short rations and hard going had brought about the old torment of swelled legs again. His feet were "wrecked." Parts of pemmican tins had been used as bootsoles on the way back.

The story of the *Roosevelt's* voyage south is one of the classic stories of the sea. She lost her rudder and all but one blade on her propeller. Her coal gave out. She was smashed again and again in the ice. She did not leave Etah until late in September, when the Arctic winter had commenced. She had two thousand miles of unlighted waters and

Wood for Fuel.

Scene on *Roosevelt* when coal gave out off Labrador Coast.

coastlines to traverse. She reached New York on Christmas Eve, 1906, in a snow-filled gale, having been reduced to burning driftwood in her furnaces.

CHAPTER XIX

SLEDGING A SCIENCE AT LAST

WE must pause here for a bit in the progress of our narrative and contemplate a phase of Peary's work that runs through nearly twenty-five years of his life. That was his scientific development of the art of ice travel. He early learned the secret of keeping warm in the bitterest weather. On his last trips he did not even take sleeping bags. He learned how to ration men and dogs. He knew what the art of organizing meant to sledging. He left us a valuable heritage in the shape of his methods for handling aborigines. He taught us a knack of effective clothing that may survive his memory. He mastered the feat of living off the country. He developed for the white man the Eskimo's ability to drive dogs, build igloos, hunt and survive when the blizzard drove even the wire-tendoned wolf to cover.

Early he came to believe in small parties. Always he harked back to the easy demoralization of large numbers, as well as the great difficulty of feeding them. With not over four men in a squad, and squads widely separated, it was always fairly easy

to keep each group together. A hare would feed the party, and a small caribou would keep men and dogs going for days.

It is interesting to add that this point is borne out by the experience of others. Peary's best work was done with from two to six in his party. Amundsen reached the South Pole with five; so did Scott. Stefansson worked widely with but a single companion. Nansen made his famous trip nearest the Pole and retreat with only Johansen. Rassmussen travels alone or with one Dane besides three or four natives.

As to the man himself, Peary early gave up the idea that the purely physical type was best fitted for Arctic work. Youth was the primary desideratum, closely followed by health. Education and previous attainment stood for much in his choice. The ambitious young man with great incentive who had already forged ahead in life, would go farther in gruelling sledge work than the muscular clod. As he pointed out many a time, it was not the cold that had to be prepared against so much as the darkness. That is to say, a sanguine temperament was just as important as ability to withstand hardship. And the depressing effect of constant darkness or the equally irritating unbroken daylight required strong nervous restraint and control.

The erroneous idea existed that to endure polar privations a man must be something of a giant in stature, an ox in strength, and as fat as possible. Peary found that, on the contrary, great size and

muscularity were more likely than not to prove handicaps in northern work. The heavy man, he found, soon wore out his footgear, and was seldom able to cover long distances—35–70 miles—over the ice. The over-muscled man did not keep in good condition if cooped up in an igloo or tent during a long period of bad weather. The fat man's body did not always lend itself to dietetic adversity.

The problem of equipping his expeditions with food and other supplies loomed less and less large for Peary as years went on. He soon learned that the omission of a single important item was serious because once away he had no means for replenishing what he had forgotten. But by reducing his list with each trip north he soon reached a point where through simplicity he achieved what superhuman forethought failed to do. For the headquarters he took largely of beans, flour, salt pork, coffee, tea and tinned butter, with ordinary percentages of sugar and condiments. For the remaining luxuries he depended mostly on what fresh meat his ship and hunting parties could secure. For the field he usually reduced to pemmican, tea and biscuit. Pemmican was an almost equal mixture of lean beef and suet put up in tins. This mass froze solid in cold weather. By having the tins of a six- or eight-pound size, and indented so that their contents could be chopped evenly into one-pound lumps rationing was very easy. Biscuits were of the common ship's "hard bread" kind, sixteen to a pound. Tea was always used in field work as it was mainly a heart

stimulant and did not affect digestion. With it was used ordinary condensed milk.

In connection with this field ration, Peary said that the real desiderata of an Arctic traveler were "a good heart, a strong stomach, and an optimistic nature." With these three, he declared, and two square meals a day a man could go around the world in any direction.

Certainly the good imagination helps. Stefansson relates that upon one occasion his only source of food remaining was some animal oil. But there seemed little advantage in his drinking it owing to the inability of the human digestive tract to retain such liquid long enough to assimilate its nourishment. Using his imagination he rolled caribou hair up in balls, dipped them in the oil and swallowed them. Thus he gave body to his meal, as well as a meal to his body.

Many years of experiment by dietitians have demonstrated that approximately two pounds per man per day were sufficient for heavy work; provided, of course, the man enjoyed a good metabolism and could stand unbroken monotony of diet. By serving a pound of biscuit and a pound of frozen pemmican divided into a morning and evening meal Peary reduced the trouble of feeding men to an absolute minimum. All the fancy foods and frills of other explorers were wholly eliminated. The only additional item on the bill of fare was a quart of tea in the morning and another quart at night. Into a gallon pot of tea, or the ration for a squad of four

men, Peary dumped a hard half pound tin of condensed milk. Tea was a great luxury on a hard trip, and weighed very little. Sometimes it was indispensable, as when camp must be made in a temperature of 60° below zero; or while a fifty-mile gale was blowing in bitter weather. At such times a fresh man well-clothed would have some trouble keeping from having his feet or fingers frosted, or in getting to sleep. But when he had on a set of sweat-soaked garments, was thoroughly exhausted by twelve hours of terrific punishment from sledging over sea-ice, and then must toil for an hour or two over tangled traces and ugly dogs, the ultimate stimulant of a quart of boiling tea could stand between him and serious frost-bite.

The physiological effect of such a régime is good. The writer traveled on it for many months and found that after the first two weeks the diet is both agreeable and healthful. Peary's men invariably were in better shape when they returned to the base after a long trip than when they left, save when actual starvation was experienced.

To cook the tea a special stove was developed that would burn alcohol with the greatest possible efficiency. A double pot was placed above the flame, one holding the ice or snow that had to be melted, and one the resulting water that was to become tea. By arranging a devious circulation for the hot air from the flame, a high percentage of heat was extracted before it escaped into the igloo. This same rig was adaptable to the Eskimo blubber lamp if

by any chance the party lost its fuel or became marooned.

It is of peculiar significance to mention while on the subject that the dread scourge of the north, scurvy, never once visited any of Peary's expeditions. He did not make use of lime juice, nor any of the common anti-scorbutics. His belief was that with plenty of fresh bread and fresh meat there was little to fear. He records that while the *Roosevelt* was lying at Cape Sheridan on the last expedition the steward baked 18,000 pounds of bread. Walrus, seal, caribou, musk-ox or bear meat were served regularly as often as they were available. No other explorer has come anywhere near this record for health.

The same principles applied to the dogs that did to the men. Dog pemmican was mixed and put up in tins just like that served the men, except that its contents were slightly less select in quality. As this food was concentrated and without waste a pound per dog per day proved sufficient even in the hardest work. Dog pemmican really solved the problem of using these animals for draught purposes. The British had years before proved their impracticability due to the great weight of meat that must be taken to feed them. Both Peary and Amundsen with pemmican reached the North and South Poles using dogs.

After food the next most important item was clothing. On his first expedition Peary patterned his garments much after those ordinarily used by

trappers in winter time in southern latitudes. Generally speaking, this had been the Greely plan. Certain modifications were made in the outer shirt to conform with the native style as it had been reported by previous expeditions. That is, a hood was sewn on and there was no opening down the shirt front. Material for all garments except boots was of heavy wool. Boots were moccasin type, and of thick leather that would withstand rocks as well as long wear over the ice and snow.

Very few weeks of work in this garb convinced Peary that he could never carry out his scheme for long journeys unless he improved his wearing apparel. In the first place, every stitch of clothing would become soaked with sweat in the first forty-eight hours and then freeze hard as a board. Moreover, so much woolen clothing was required to keep him and his men warm in the blasts of Ice-Cap gales that progress was slow and laborious. In short, civilized clothing proved an utter failure under Arctic conditions. And while it was good enough for an afternoon stroll when the temperature was 58° below zero, it wouldn't do to travel in and then to wear it out the next morning, without a chance to dry it.

Native skin costumes were the only solution. These were impervious to wind; could stand almost any amount of punishment; absorbed a very small percentage of body moisture; and when properly fitted, could keep a man warm in the lowest temperatures.

The rig worn by the men in later expeditions was

exactly that of the native. In consequence serious freezing even among the tenderfeet was rare. Hooded caribou skin shirts and bearskin breeches with boots of the skin of the seal formed the main outfit. An undershirt of birdskins and socks of hareskin completed it. The whole outfit weighed scarcely more than a heavy winter overcoat, and only about half what the old-fashioned polar costume weighed. Yet it was warm enough for the men to sleep in at night without sleeping bags by simply drawing their arms inside their sleeves.

There were many tricks to be mastered in the use of this clothing. Peary learned that an Eskimo never stands with feet apart or arms akimbo, as such postures bare the large blood vessels of the limbs to the cold. When very hot from work the native uncovered his forehead by throwing back his hood. This tended to prevent the formation of moisture inside shirt and breeches. Sleeves were made to cover the knuckles in order that hands may be bared for untangling traces. Correct ventilation around the waist was another means of disposing of body moisture. Grass padded between socks and boots was highly important. Peary required all his men to learn this trick before they ventured into the field.

"He's just stupid," the Eskimos said of a young hunter who got his fingers or toes frostbitten.

Another thing Peary tried to teach his men was how to build a snow igloo. Ordinarily, as one white man worked with several Eskimos, the latter did this

job. But in an emergency it was a great advantage for the white man to know how to construct such a shelter. Considerable practice was required, and Peary himself was one of the few whites who ever mastered the art.

He gave up the tent for an igloo because the latter does not have to be added to the sledge load. An igloo for five men could be built in 45 minutes. No tool was required except a long knife. No material save snow. Once finished it would support three men on its roof. A cyclone could not demolish it. It was air and water tight, sound and tempest proof; warm, dry, light, durable, well-ventilated and clean. Its doors had weather strips but no hinges. Its window could be of transparent ice, but was almost unbreakable. Its floor was marble white and hard, yet could be replaced in ten minutes. After a hard day's travel Peary found a snow igloo with its quiet security and its warmth a heavenly refuge as compared with a cold and slatting tent which was always too small and crowded.

Another thing was that igloos built on the way out were there on the return, like small white hotels awaiting the tired traveler. In all his Polar Sea work Peary never bothered with a tent or other artificial shelter which would only have added that much more for the weak dogs to drag.

After the igloos came the dogs. Wrote Peary:

"It is doubtful if the North Pole would ever have been discovered with our present means and facilities

but for the help of the faithful Eskimos; and it is an absolute certainty that it would still be undiscovered but for the Eskimo dog to furnish traction power for our sledges, thus enabling us to carry supplies where nothing else could carry them."

As has been noted, early expeditions logically demonstrated that dogs were not a practicable help on a long journey. In the course of his first two expeditions Peary easily disproved this fact. In the first place, he exacted from his native friends their true Eskimo dogs. Such animals had been carefully developed through several generations. Most of them had a strain of pure wolf blood in their veins, which gave them that savage endurance so requisite for a long trip.

Dog feeding was handled exactly as the natives handled it. Other Arctic explorers had attempted to feed the dogs on the basis of a white man's dog ration. Peary learned that a native feeds but once in two or three days when his dogs are not working; and that during hard work one feeding a day was sufficient. He learned that the skin of the walrus must be left attached to the meat in order that by staying longer in the animal it imparted more of its contained nourishment. Straight meat or blubber was not so good as dog food in preparation for gruelling work as the native diet of hairy walrus skin with shreds of fat and meat clinging to it.

The dogs were, of course, best handled by native drivers. But Peary studied the game until he became an adept at the whip and upstanders. This enabled

him in later years to provide harness and traces and whip stocks that were better than anything the tribe had been able to secure. And it made it possible for him to plan in advance just how much equipment he would need in the aggregate for the large number of sledges he used on each extensive journey.

Probably the greatest advantage in dogs, beside their marvelous endurance, was the fact that they required little assistance during the march itself, and no shelter in camp. During the fiercest blizzards they simply lay down and let the snow drift over them.

It was significant that the sledges with which Peary reached the North Pole were not of the native type, but had been developed along lines suggested by his experience. This is no reflection on native intelligence, but arose from the fact that they had neither the material nor the necessity for carrying very heavy loads over the sort of rough going met on the Polar Sea.

Peary's average load per sledge on leaving the ship was about 650 pounds. This threw an enormous strain on both runners whenever the sledge was not moving on an even keel. Gradually he developed a runner of solid oak or hickory having steel shod wooden shoes two inches wide. The sharp pointed bows of the native vehicle gave way to rounded ends that tended to ride up over nubbles much the same way the *Roosevelt* was designed to ride over the floes. The better to offset strains at

such times a rounded bow of hickory connected the two bow ends and distributed each blow or pressure as received.

The after end of the native sledge was fitted with vertical upstanders which are useful in steering. But over the Polar Sea it often became a question of wrestling a ponderous load over towering masses of tumbled ice blocks. At such times dogs could rarely pull with full strength. The driver had to put his shoulder under his load and lift it. Hence Peary designed his upstanders slanting well backward and providing a useful leverage when lifting was in order.

Peary did not build his own sledges. He designed them and brought the material north with him. He well realized that the native method of lashing was far superior to any sort of bolting or nailing which would only have weakened the whole structure. He was then shrewd enough to let each driver that he had selected for the winter's work build his own sledge. He knew that the natural pride and spirit of competition among the members of the tribe would give him a far better outfit of sledges than any set of experts at home could ever contrive.

By the time of the 1905–6 expedition he had also developed his plan of advance and supporting parties to a scientific degree. Both had been used to some extent by other expeditions, but not in exactly the same way. Moreover Peary was the first efficiently to utilize a pioneer party to break a trail for men and dogs over long stretches of bad going. Only

one who has done this sort of work can realize with what different spirit dogs work when they can follow a sledge trail left by another party in front. No matter what their load, the following teams seem to double in strength and alacrity.

Throughout his later expeditions Peary worked on the unit basis which was independent and self-supporting for fifty days. The sledge carried about 650 pounds to start with. Of this, 500 pounds of dog pemmican gave each animal one pound per day. Fifty pounds of hard biscuit and fifty pounds of man pemmican gave the driver a pound each day. A few gallons of kerosene, a tiny stove, tinned milk, tea and some extra footgear and mittens completed the outfit.

A snow igloo will hold four men comfortably. A gallon of tea at night and another in the morning will keep four men going. Four men can just about handle a 600-pound deadweight mass over a seventy-foot pressure ridge. One white man can keep three Eskimos busy, amused, fed, cheered, and loyal. Thus four men, one white and three brown, made up the size of the party Peary chose to group his helpers in for the sea-ice work.

So Peary had members of each party of four take turns at trail breaking throughout the long marches. This plan made it possible for Peary to line the trail with food. The advance patrol always wore out physically before it had used all its supplies. It cached what it had, turned and sped back light, leaving its extras for those to come. In this way

physical energy of men and dogs was conserved. Land advance in the recent war was made by almost the same system of trail breaking and replacements that Peary had once used on the Polar Sea.

It is then not difficult to understand how Peary placed himself within easy striking distance of the Pole. Conversely, it is not conceivable that a single unsupported sledge party could make the entire trip and back. Peary's strongest trail-breaking party collapsed at one quarter of the distance to be covered. Six groups were thus expended in blazing the way.

As an indication of what scientific planning and equipment had done it is well to consider Peary's sledging records alongside those of the leading sledgers who were his predecessors:

Greely	in	60	days	averaged	about	12 miles
Parry	"	61	"	"	10	"
Duke Abruzzi	"	104	"	"	8¾	"
Nansen	"	120	"	"	6¾	"
Nares	"	72	"	"	2½	"
Peary	"	45	"	"	33	"

In this connection it must be noted that spreading so many parties over a trackless waste involved very exact navigation in order that they might find one another after trails had been obliterated; and in order to gauge the amount of work that would have to be done to move supplies from one point along the route to another. It was necessary that nearly

all white leaders be capable navigators. The number of miles covered was estimated by dead reckoning first; that is, by multiplying the estimated speed by the number of hours traveled. Then, at intervals, astronomical sights were taken to check the figures.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST TRIP NORTH

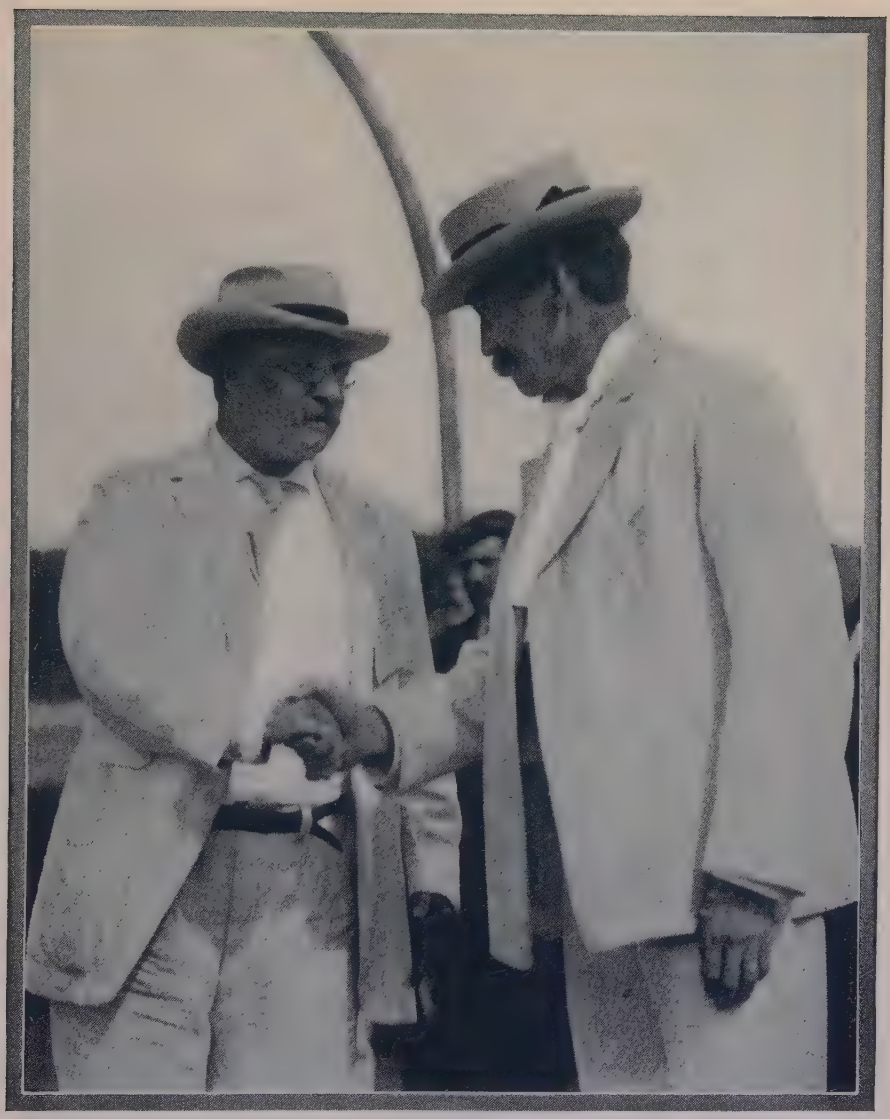
A PRACTISED man in action at his chosen occupation is always a fascinating spectacle. When Peary left New York for the north in 1908 he had nearly 25 years of planning and doing behind him. He was 52 years of age. His chosen route was through the worst part of the northern ice. His men were mostly new and untried save for two who had been with him before. Yet from the moment the *Roosevelt* shoved off until she reached her pier again nearly sixteen months later Peary cannot be said to have made a false step so far as Arctic work was concerned. This was especially attested to by the fact that the inexperienced assistants with him did not suffer any more than if they had made a stiff mountain trip in the western Rockies. His Eskimos knew just what to expect and had both dogs and drivers to supply the Leader with. Even the untried crew of the ship found to their surprise that every step had been planned for them ahead of time. The voyage north was practically a duplication of that of 1905. The start on the ice was a little different. Conditions were singularly similar to those of the unfortunate experience of 1906. But there was at

last a human checkmate for every obstacle Nature set in the way of the master explorer. Now, if ever, Peary proved that man is supreme if man's intelligence can be pyramided to offset the elements.

Before the expedition got away there was the usual round of anxieties and delays. The Peary Arctic Club had received their protégé's plan for a base somewhat westward of Cape Hecla, and his scheme of taking advantage of the easterly set of current that would bring him over the actual Pole. Both records and plans were promptly accepted. Therefore contracts were let for new boilers and other repairs for the *Roosevelt* that would make her really better than new. These contracts called for completion on or before July 1st, 1907. This would enable the expedition to get away that summer. All went rapidly forward and there was every evidence that the final attack on the Pole would be made in the spring of 1908. Then things began unexpectedly to slow up.

"Experience had taught me how to figure on delays in the North," exclaimed Peary. "But the exasperating delays of ship contractors at home had not entered into my scheme of reckoning."

Weeks dragged into months. Labor troubles succeeded financial ones. A dozen other maddening obstacles had to be overcome. Once more financial difficulties were faced. These were personal. Mr. Jesup was the financial bulwark for official expedition funds. Peary's book *Nearest the Pole*, story of



"I Believe in You, Peary."

Theodore Roosevelt bidding the explorer goodbye at Oyster Bay in the summer of 1909.

the 1906 voyage, came out, but proved only a mediocre success. As in his lectures the author was prone to stick too closely to the literal truth not only in figure but in spirit. In consequence his chronicle lost much of that spice with which less scrupulous or more imaginative travelers have been able to bedeck their literary works. A regrettable thing it was that the laborer could not be rewarded in proportion to his toil. Yet it was this very literalness of spirit and fixity of purpose that lent heat to the original Inspiration and permitted the final goal to be attained.

A whole year was lost, and with it much of the glory that should have gone with the great discovery, as we shall presently see.

Peary's anguish of disappointment at the postponement for a year of all his plans was as nothing compared with his dismay at the next calamity that was to befall him. "Fortunately I did not know that Fate was even then clenching her fist for yet another and more crushing blow."

This was the sudden and wholly unexpected death of Morris K. Jesup without whose promised help the expedition seemed impossible. To use Peary's own words, the blow seemed a "paralyzing one."

For a time all was at a standstill. Furlough had not yet been attained from the Navy Department. There was a huge deficit to be made up in the Club's accounts. No money was available to pay scientific assistants. And every source of additional cash seemed to have been tapped. Moreover,

there was that old lethargy to be faced among the country at large. People were thoroughly fed up on Arctic matters and couldn't see the sense of wasting more lives and money on the futile game.

At the very threshold of the season for departure Peary found himself once more a beaten man. He had his ship and some supplies. But he had no leave and not enough money to go north even if he obtained leave. Once more in his desperation he drew up a circular letter and sent it to all the individuals who conceivably might be won over to support at this late hour. This letter was dated May 2, 1908, four days before his 52nd birthday, and read:

GRAND UNION HOTEL,
NEW YORK CITY,
May 2, 1908.

The recent death of Mr. Jesup, who was my personal friend, deeply interested in my Arctic work, and President of the Peary Arctic Club (which financed my last expedition), has given the home end of my work a very serious aspect.

I am devoting all my time, and utilizing every possible means of bringing the matter of additional funds to the favorable attention of men who may be likely to be interested. I am also making this personal appeal to all those who have been interested in the great work in the past.

It is, as you can readily understand, uphill work, but I cannot believe that the death of any one man, however irreparable that loss may be, will be permitted to put a stop to a work of such interest and

magnitude, especially where so much in the way of preparation and equipment is already accomplished.

The present status of affairs is as follows:

The *Roosevelt* has been thoroughly repaired from her last struggles with the ice, has been fitted with two new boilers, and is now lying at the foot of East 24th Street waiting for the time for departure to the north.

I have 25,000 pounds of pemmican (a concentrated meat food for Arctic sledge work), purchased and stored. Also other items of equipment to a total value of some $15,000.

Insurance of the ship, dockage, charges, storage of pemmican, are provided for until the 1st of June. Matthew Henson, my faithful colored man, is living on board ship as watchman, and is in addition putting in regular day's work making sledges, camp stoves, and other special items of Arctic equipment under my personal supervision. His pay is also provided for until the 1st of June. Captain Bartlett, my sailing master on the last expedition, is retained in the employ of the Club on half pay, and his salary until the 1st of June is also provided for.

It is important that I go North this summer, leaving New York about the first of July. Should conditions prove favorable the work can be accomplished and the expedition return in about fifteen months. I should have supplies and equipment, however, for a stay of three years if necessary.

I need additional money for the balance of my equipment, pay of crew, expenses of collier to go part way north with me, etc.

The additional amount needed is $50,000. Of this amount I need about $5,000 at once to enable me to place orders for certain items of equipment, as for instance, whale boats, that require time for

building; $35,000 additional will be required by the first of July; $5,000 on the return of the auxiliary ship or collier next September; and $5,000 on the return of the expedition, for completing wages of the crew.

I trust you will pardon my apparent egotism in the following brief statement of facts.

The work in which I am engaged and the objects which I have before me, have claimed the best efforts of some of the ablest men of the most enlightened nations of the world for three centuries.

It has been my good fortune to meet with more success than any of my predecessors.

I have greater experience in Arctic work and a more complete knowledge of details and conditions bearing upon it, than any other man living.

I have the ability to utilize in my work the utmost efforts and the fullest resources of an entire tribe of Eskimos, the most effective material in the world for the rank and file of an Arctic expedition.

It is the consensus of opinion of geographers, both home and foreign, that my next expedition will achieve its object, secure for this country one of the great geographical prizes, solve the principal geographical problems of the North and bring back an amount of material and information which will fully justify the expedition.

Danger and sensationalism are practically eliminated by my methods.

I have devoted nearly twenty years of my life to efforts to solve the great problems of the North.

As a guarantee of my earnestness I have put into the work all my personal means, and all that I could earn, a total of some $80,000.

"I am ready now to devote three years more if necessary to the completion of the work, and had I

the money, or the means of earning it, I would put that in also.

"Here, however, my ability fails, and I am obliged to appeal to the generosity and public spirit of my friends. If they can help a little further, their assistance, with that which I may obtain from new sources, will permit the final completion of the work upon which so much time and effort have been expended.

Very sincerely,
R. E. PEARY.

The tide turned when General Thomas H. Hubbard accepted the presidency of the Peary Arctic Club. He contributed a large check. Mrs. Jesup, despite her grief, generously sent another check. But, while these munificent gifts staved off the sheriff, they did not make the expedition possible. Then from an wholly unexpected source came the $10,000 that finally cleared the way to the Pole. This sum came from Mr. Zenas Crane, the great Massachusetts paper manufacturer.

But a whole year had been lost. So instead of leaving in the summer of 1907, it was July 8, 1908, before the President of the United States, after a thorough inspection of the famous ship which bore his name, said, as he went over her side in the harbor of Oyster Bay: "I believe in you, Peary, and I believe in your success."

There were the usual number of freak ideas suggested by well-wishers who feared lest Peary might fail again. There was submitted a design for a submarine with a red-hot nose that would permit her

to melt her way to the surface and rise at the Pole after swimming under the pack to its vicinity. Motor cars and flying machines in great numbers and descriptions were offered. An enthusiastic inventor devised a saw-mill that could be set up on the shore of the Polar Sea for shaping lumber with which a tunnel to the Pole would be built—despite the fact that the northern limit of trees was 1200 miles south of the *Roosevelt's* anchorage. There was brought in by another a plan for a central soup station to be served at the ship and by pipe-lines keep the advancing parties warm and well fed. What Peary termed "the gem of the whole collection" was the mechanical device of an energetic engineer which would shoot the explorer to the Pole. How he was to return had not been worked out.

The party of assistants selected was a small one. Captain Bob Bartlett commanded the *Roosevelt;* and, of course, there was Matt Henson who was now more Eskimo than African. Ross Marvin went again, having done so well on the 1906 trip. George Borup, a young and amiable Yale athlete, was later to prove unexpectedly efficient in the field. Dr. Goodsell of New Kensington, Pa., was chosen surgeon of the expedition. Donald B. MacMillan, of superb physique and who had already served his apprenticeship with Dr. Cabot in Labrador, completed the small staff.

The ship backed out into the East River on July 6, 1908, the hottest day of the season, and a record for years. Before sundown in New York there were

An Ice Island.

Huge bergs dot the surface of Melville Bay wherein natives find good summer hunting by kayak.

13 deaths and 72 prostrations from heat. None aboard the polar ship wished himself back home that day. Incidentally, the capricious public had again become more interested in the venture; and there was much whistle blowing and flag waving as the little vessel steamed slowly up toward Hell Gate. The press ran enthusiastic stories about Peary's chances; and there was much speculation as to what he would find if he actually reached the Pole. Of the possibility that another might try to share with him the honors there was no word said.

The final parting was at Sydney, Nova Scotia, the scene of so many leave-takings of Arctic expeditions. Peary describes it:

"A little tug, which we had chartered to take our guests back to Sydney, followed the *Roosevelt*, as far as Low Point Light outside the harbor. There she ran alongside, and Mrs. Peary and the children with two or three other friends transferred to her. As my five-year-old son Robert kissed me good-bye he said: 'Come back soon, Dad.' With reluctant eyes I watched the little tug grow smaller in the blue distance. Another farewell—and there had been so many! Brave, noble little woman! You have borne with me the brunt of all my Arctic work. But, somehow, this parting was less sad than any which had gone before. I think that we both felt it was the last." It was, but one.

The voyage northward was much the same as in the past. On the Labrador 70 tons of whale meat were taken aboard as dog food. This would obvi-

ate the necessity of hunting walrus in Smith Sound, and thereby save time. That the whale meat would become indescribably foul-odored, and that the dogs would often die from eating it, could not be foreseen. Usually the cold days northward would have preserved the meat; and since it was so much like walrus the dogs should not have suffered. But the Arctic is full of paradoxes. And—

"And if I had gone on traveling north for a hundred years I should still have learned new lessons," confessed the Leader after it was all over.

At Cape York the Eskimos raced out in their kayaks. Peary had told them each time that he would never come north again. And here he was.

"You are like the sun, Pearyaksoah," Alakasingwaq told him. "You always come back. And when the Almighty Devil has taken your body from you I think your spirit will often visit us."

From the two- and three-iglood villages along the coast families were gathered until there were aboard some twenty of the finest drivers and hunters in the tribe. Wives as seamstresses were taken too, not only because the men would not come without them, but because full native equipment of clothing must be had for the white travelers. And the wives would not come without the children. To all of which were added about 200 dogs and the full native outfits that each family owned of tents, skins, lines, harnesses, harpoons, and so on. Hence, when to the putrefying deck load of whale meat was added half a tribe of odoriferous natives with a horde of

howling wolf-like dogs the filth and pandemonium of the small ship's deck may be imagined. The dogs grew more violent with each day of confinement. There was a time when the cook would not visit the fore part of the ship without passing over the rigging lest he be devoured by the snarling pack.

At Etah rendezvous was made with the *Erik* which had brought a cargo of coal. A stop was made to blow down boilers, clean them and the furnaces, and make everything shipshape for the coming struggle with the ice. As will be seen from the map, Etah is the last point northward that can always be reached each season without fighting ice fields. Thenceforward the narrowing neck between Greenland and Ellesmere Land presents an ice-choked passage which Peary knew; and knowing it, respected the struggle he now faced. It is worthy of note that here he left a cache of food and coal in case the ship were crushed and his party were forced to retreat. So had the worst happened, there would have been no tragedy. With this cache stayed Boatswain Murphy, Pritchard the cabin boy, and Harry Whitney who had gone north purely as a sportsman and passenger. This group were to become notorious in the following year as it was with them Cook claimed he left his records. Rudolphe Franke, Cook's assistant, came aboard at this point having been living with the natives. He reported that Cook expected him to return by any conveyance that showed up. Examination by the *Roosevelt's* physician revealed that not only was the man suffering from scurvy, but

that he was in a serious mental state. As a result Peary of course gave him passage home on the *Erik*. Final instructions to Boatswain Murphy required him to guard particularly the small amount of supplies and equipment that had been left in the neighborhood by the rival explorer. Some of the Eskimos were here weeded out from those aboard, and a few more dogs crowded on to strengthen the teams sure to be depleted in the fall hunting. At the end there were 22 men, 17 women, and 10 children from the tribe, together with 246 full grown dogs. To the 70 tons of whale meat was added the meat and blubber of 50 walruses. In trying to grasp what these figures mean, the reader must not forget that the *Roosevelt* was just a tug-size ship.

Now came the final offense against 350 miles of ice field that lay between the ship and her winter berth on the shores of the Polar Sea. From the diary we read:

"Imagine about 350 miles of almost solid ice—ice of all shapes and sizes, mountainous ice, flat ice, ragged and tortured ice, ice that for every foot of height revealed above the surface of the water, hides seven feet below: a theatre of action which for diabolic and titanic struggle makes Dante's frozen circle of the Inferno seem like a skating pond."

On the afternoon of August 18, 1908, the little black ship got underway. That afternoon began the weeks of dodging, ramming, pushing, crashing, wrestling battle with the pack-ice. And not once in

Captain Robert Bartlett.

those weeks of pounding did the 246 dogs cooped up on the narrow deck with over 100 tons of rotting meat stop howling at the top of their lungs. Such is the favorite outdoor sport of all Eskimo dogs when they have no work on hand.

Fog came down early in the fight. And there were some bad collisions and pinches. Several times the *Roosevelt* was squeezed out of tight places after being punished in a way that would have done for a less sturdy vessel.

"*Rip 'em, Teddy! Bite 'em in two!*" yelled Captain Bob from the main top barrel where he and the Leader took turns conning the ship.

It was a long fight and a hard one. But experience won. On September 5th the *Roosevelt* rounded Cape Sheridan and reached a latitude of 82° 30′ North, a world's record for a ship under her own steam; and higher than any ship except the drifting *Fram* of Nansen had ever reached. Moreover, it put the expedition again within striking distance of its goal. Those four dark years of '98–02 had borne their full fruition at last. For without the knowledge of ice conditions they had brought, this success would have been impossible.

There was no confusion or doubt about what next was to be done after the ship was moored in as safe a place as possible. Vigorous routine began at once and every move of every adult on board was a move towards the great sledging journey contemplated in the spring. Supplies were at once taken ashore both for an emergency, and in preparation

for the move westward to the jump-off spot at Cape Columbia. Hunting parties of natives went inland for fresh meat, seeking the musk-ox herds Peary had located in past years. Sledges were built and skin garments sewed night and day. Dogs were tethered out on the ice and the ship cleaned from truck to keelson. The tenderfeet received their first lessons in driving and traveling. All equipment was overhauled and repaired. Indeed, no military system could have been more exacting or efficient than that which went smoothly forward from the first day all through the winter. Surely Peary spoke from his heart as he exclaimed: "How easy it all seems, when I think of the past!"

One of the great points about Peary's system that differed from those of his predecessors was that he permitted no vacation period during the dark months. It was customary on all other expeditions in the past for great efforts to be made in the way of entertainment after the sun had disappeared over the southern horizon early in October. Games were instituted; theatricals were drummed up; indoor tasks were devised; and every manner of occupation or diversion resorted to in order that the mental condition of expedition members might remain as fresh as possible.

Contrast all this with Peary's plan of action. That he had learned it from the natives did not detract from his resourcefulness in putting it through.

He insisted that both the waning twilight and the monthly moonlight be used for traveling or outdoor

work of a valuable sort. Expeditions were sent off in all directions for game. One party went west to take tidal observations. More of the Greely records were brought up from Conger. White men were made to learn dog-driving and igloo-building as far as possible. Of course there were blizzards; and the days grew inky black in December when the moon was absent. But this did not lead to any sort of indoor life which would have softened the men as it had on so many other expeditions for spring work. Spring with Peary meant early February when the light began to return. He refused to wait for April with its brilliant days. And since his men were in condition from a winter of hard work he was able to start early in the Arctic dawn and keep in the field practically three months.

An incident of moment occurred on one of the fall hunting trips. Peary was away with a party of his hunters when a bear was sighted. As usual the best bear dogs were loosed to round up the game. But, to the astonishment of the natives, this big bear wouldn't "round up" at all. He simply kept on going as fast as he could gallop. This behavior convinced the Eskimos at once that *Tornasuk*, the Almighty Devil, was in the bear. And since he had been heading for the *Roosevelt* it was clear what had been in store for the expedition. Peary listened to this quick exposition given by his men, but insisted that the hunt go on. The bear was killed after a long chase. He proved to be an enormous animal. To this day Ootah, one of the North Pole party,

claims that by shooting it Peary's hunters guaranteed the ultimate success of the *Roosevelt's* mission.

Besides hunting and ship work, much was done throughout the winter in sledging supplies to Cape Columbia, 45 miles west. Some 20,000 pounds were transferred before Christmas. This meant an even earlier start when the light returned. And it broke the trail and kept it open from week to week.

A serious situation arose early in the winter when dogs began rapidly to die. Should this have gone on the sea trip was off. Peary had the surgeon perform a *post mortem* on each animal. Finally it was concluded that rotten whale meat was the cause of the trouble. But there was not sufficient other dog food aboard. Peary's experience came quickly to his aid. He gathered his hunters and told them that musk-oxen had to be killed in sufficient numbers to keep the main dog pack alive for the Pole trip. He reminded them of the year he and their tribe-mates had lived off the country back of Conger and in the Lake Hazen district. "Now go, and bring back fat dogs," he directed. It was dark, and bitter temperatures accompanied the almost daily blizzards. But the hunters obeyed, and over 65 per cent. of the dogs were saved.

Several times during the dark months the main pack came in with very heavy pressure and moved the vast shore ice behind which the *Roosevelt* had taken refuge. Several times things looked bad, and all hands were prepared to abandon their home and move into the igloos built for emergency ashore.

But each time at the critical moment the pressure slackened, and the sore-tried ship slipped complainingly back into her berth from which she had been lifted.

"The Almighty Devil is ill this winter, or dead with the Bear," Oobloyah would say. The others only shook their heads grimly. They had been here on the 1906 voyage and seen the *Roosevelt's* rudder torn away by the ice as a crab might nip a piece of slender grass.

CHAPTER XXI

THE POLE

AT ten o'clock on the morning of Washington's birthday, February 22, 1909, Peary left the *Roosevelt* for the North Pole. The weather was thick; temperature 31° below zero; and a light snow falling. At ten in the morning there was just light enough to travel by.

Ahead, 90 miles to the westward at Cape Columbia, equipped for work were the units of Eskimos and white men that were to make up the column of attack to be thrown out over the Polar Sea. In these units were seven white men, nineteen Eskimos, one hundred and forty-six dogs, and twenty sledges. The trail to Cape Columbia had been kept open throughout the fall and winter by supply trains, and hunting parties.

The "Peary System" was now thoroughly in motion. The main points of this system were:

To drive a ship through the ice to the farthest possible northern land base from which she could be driven back again the following year.

To do enough hunting during the fall and winter to keep the party healthily supplied with fresh meat.

To have dogs enough to allow for the loss of sixty per cent of them by death or otherwise.

To have the confidence of a large number of Eskimos, earned by square-dealing and generous gifts in the past, so that they would follow the leader to any point he might specify.

To have an intelligent and willing body of civilized assistants to lead the various divisions of Eskimos—men whose authority would be accepted when delegated by the leader.

To transport beforehand to the point where the expedition would leave the land for the sledge journey, sufficient food, fuel, clothing, stoves, and other mechanical equipment to get the main party to the Pole and back and the various divisions to their farthest north and back.

To have an ample supply of the best kind of sledges.

To have a sufficient number of divisions or relay parties, each under the leadership of a competent assistant, to send back at appropriate and carefully calculated stages along the upward journey.

To have every item of equipment of the quality best suited to the purpose, thoroughly tested, and of the lightest possible weight.

To know by long experience, the best way to cross wide leads of open water.

To return by the same route followed on the upward march, using the beaten trail and already-constructed igloos to save the time and strength that would have to be expended in constructing new igloos and in trail-breaking.

To know exactly to what extent each man and dog may be worked without injury.

To know the physical and mental capabilities of every assistant and Eskimo.

Last, for the Leader to have the absolute confidence of every member of the party, white, black or brown, so that every order of the Leader will be implicitly obeyed.

It had taken the long years from 1886 to 1909 to learn these classic rules. With slight adjustment they might apply to any human enterprise.

Captain Bob Bartlett was ahead in charge of the pioneer party that was to break the trail for those to follow. George Borup came next. These two and Marvin, Peary said he counted on most: Bartlett for his experience and vigor after many years in the north; Borup and Marvin for their youthful zest and virility. Neither failed.

The story of the poleward march is an oft-told one. Its salient feature was the smoothness with which the complex plan of the Leader carried through despite difficulties and troubles that cropped up daily. The great thing was that practically every difficulty and trouble had been anticipated.

Dogs died of *piblockto:* there were more dogs. Open water held the parties up: extra time had been gained by starting early. Advance parties gave out: supporting parties took their place. A white man froze his foot: another took his place. A native deserted: he proved an extra and was not needed. Pressure ridges loomed like mountain ranges across the course:

axe gangs hewed a trail. And so on through the toilsome weeks. One who did not know of the 23 years it had taken to learn the game would have said it was marvelous luck for the parties to travel as smoothly as they did.

Yet it was not a smooth trip by any means. No trip on the Polar Sea is smooth, though the outer reaches are level as compared with the first 100 miles, that area of ragged, tortured floes that have been crushed against the land when the 2000-mile wide ice-sheet to which they belong has been flung in by wind and tide. Upended sheets twenty feet thick, ridges of huge blocks a hundred feet high, areas of floating fragments and open leads, were all part of the daily march in the early stages of the journey.

Then came the inevitable "Big Lead" that had been met before. Full moon had come, and with it "spring" or high tides. These Peary took to be the cause of open water. Far away in the north across the black stretch of steaming sea was just visible the white thread of the field beyond. Six days were wasted before this Stygian river. "Only one who had been in a similar position," wrote Peary, "could understand the gnawing torment of our forced inaction, as I paced the floe in front of the igloos most of the time; climbing every little while to the top of the ice pinnacle back of the igloos to strain my eyes through the dim light to the south; sleeping through a few hours out of each twenty-four, with one ear open for the slightest noise; rising repeatedly to listen more intently for the eagerly desired sound of

incoming dogs. . . . Altogether, I think that more of mental wear and tear was crowded into those days than into all the rest of the fifteen months we were absent from civilization." Incidentally, it was at this point that MacMillan proved his full worth and in a way made possible the discovery of the Pole. As Peary put it: "MacMillan had a natural talent for handling the natives. Through the hard days at the Big Lead he kept them busy and happy with games and tests of strength."

And all the while the fuel for which Marvin and Borup had been sent back to get, might mean the success or failure of the whole journey: for, despite all the months and months of planning, the unforeseen had occurred in that the best alcohol tins that could be bought had begun to leak.

Marvin did not come. Temperature fell to 59° below zero, which effectually closed the lead. Two Eskimos deserted. A gale blew up with drifting snow. But Peary was in no mood to trifle with minor difficulties. He ordered sledges lashed. The lead ahead, and six others were crossed that day—March 12th. Next day a light sledge overtook the party bringing the cheering news that the precious fuel was across the Big Lead and on its way to join the Leader.

At 84° 29′ Dr. Godsell and one unit of natives were sent back. Thus began the weeding out of men and dogs that had borne the brunt of the early offense. At 85° 25′ George Borup turned back, taking with him three Eskimos and sixteen dogs.

The pick of the natives and dogs remained, all with full loads. Bartlett was still breaking trail to the north, followed by Marvin and Henson, each with his own units of dogs, Eskimos and sledges. Peary still brought up the rear, reserving his strength and that of his best Eskimos and dogs for the final test. So plentiful were supplies of fuel, tea and milk at this point that the regular allowance was increased by 25%.

Another advantage here cropped up. As daylight had now become continuous, the whole column was divided into two parties, one traveling during the twelve hours of the "night," the other through the twelve hours of the "day," though it was all day. This brought each party in touch with the other every twenty-four hours, and exempted the rear group in which Peary worked from building any igloos, as they turned out the advance party on arrival at the latter's camp.

On Friday, March 26, at latitude 86° 34′ Marvin turned back with two Eskimos and seventeen dogs. Peary's goodbye was the last exchange Marvin had with one of his own race. When his two Eskimos reached the *Roosevelt* they reported that he broke through the rubber ice of the Big Lead and was drowned on the way back. They said his body still floated when they went on. They were frightened and threw in the things among his personal belongings "his spirit might need in the next world" and left him there.

Peary now traveled with eight men and sixty

dogs, and seven fully loaded sledges: the pick of the great company that had started a month before. The going was getting better, as it does far from land; yet an occasional lead was still met. By March 27th the previous record of 87° 6′ was broken. Yet,

"even now," the diary reads, "I dared not build too much on the chances of the white and treacherous ice which stretched one hundred and eighty nautical miles northward between me and the end. I had believed for years that this thing could be done, and that it was my destiny to do it; but I always reminded myself that many a man had felt thus about some dearly wished achievement, only to fail in the end."

On March 28 open water appeared suddenly ahead again. There was nothing to do but camp: more desperate waiting. Scarcely had the tired men dropped off to sleep than they were awakened by a creaking and groaning outside the igloo. Peary concluded that the noise probably came from a nearby pressure ridge. Then abruptly a wild yelling rose from without. Instantly all were awake. A huge ice-cake had broken from the pack and left open water right up to the igloo entrance. One team was lashed to a ring in the ice within a foot from the break. Had their tether gone the whole group of dogs would been drawn in and drowned. Bartlett's igloo on an ice raft that had been chipped from the main floe was drifting rapidly away. Swiftly sledges were loaded and lashed, teams re-hitched and the whole party hurried to a nearby floe of ancient ice

where new igloos were built. Bartlett escaped when his chance raft drifted into the pack again.

The next day was a short one due to the disturbed night. But the world's record, and Peary's, were broken: 87° 12′ was reached. A sounding was made to 1,260 fathoms but no bottom reached.

Ensuing marches began to lengthen out. As the land was being left further and further behind the stretches of good going were longer. One lake or lead of thin young ice was over seven miles across. When the 88th parallel of latitude had been passed Bartlett turned back with two of his natives. This was no surprise for the Captain. He knew all along that he should be the last to return, but that the "system" contemplated his leaving the main party when a point within striking distance of the Pole had been reached. And the "system" was inexorable in its dictates. Before he made his final march Bartlett had a chance to take an observation placing the camp at 87° 47′. Peary made a point of having individual members fix the latitude along the way, not only to corroborate his own figures but to save his eyes for the final test.

There were now in the party Peary and Henson and four Eskimos. Also there were five sledges and forty dogs, the pick of 140 with which they had left the ship. These four Eskimos were the pick of the tribe. The writer later came to know them all personally over a period of three years. They proved intelligent, industrious and very human companions. Henson in 1909 was in many respects the equal of an

Eskimo. He was a good driver and an experienced traveler. He had worked with Peary in the field since his tropical days of 1884.

Only 133 miles ahead now lay the Pole. Going had improved. Men and dogs had been saved and picked and primed for this final dash. The natives had seen a small library globe on the ship. Often they spoke of the "Big Nail" at the end of the globe. Would there be a huge replica of that nail at the apex of the earth? The idea fascinated them, and all became more eager with each day's journey.

Peary could not sleep. Up and down in front of the igloo he paced, laying his final plans for the next few days. "This was the time for which I had reserved all my energies, for which I had lived the simple life and trained myself as for a race!" He was fifty-three, but he was physically fit. And his Inspiration burned bright.

More leads were met; but they were small ones. Pressure ridges continued to dwindle. A sledge broke but was quickly repaired. Both dogs and men were sensing victory now. Marches lengthened out to twenty-five and thirty miles a day. Wind and temperatures of minus fifty meant little. "*Give me three more days of this!*" exclaims the diary.

On April 5th the camp was only 35 miles from the Pole by observation. The going still improved. But men and dogs were beginning to feel the strain of forced marching. Food could not be left behind on the ice because of the continual movement. A cache could never be found again in that white

wilderness once lost in the cleaving leads. Peary called his men together. "One more long day," he told them, "and then back to the ship."

"Yes, if the Almighty Devil doesn't catch us first," muttered Ooqueah.

At 10 A.M. on the morning of April 6, 1909, Peary and five men reached the North Pole Camp. He found it located in the center of a vast sea of ice. In contrast the South Pole is located on a plateau of nearly equal diameter with the Polar Sea, but the height of this plateau is nearly the same as the depth of the sea at the northern axis, namely about 10,000 feet. Peary's soundings near the Pole gave about 1,500 fathoms.

The actual Pole lay about three sea miles, or 6,000 yards beyond this camp. It is a matter of human interest that when he actually had his fingers on the prize, so to speak, Peary found himself too weary to take those last few steps and stand at the point he had given his lifetime to win.

"The accumulated weariness of those days and nights of forced marches, insufficient sleep, constant peril and anxiety, seemed to roll across me all at once. I was actually too exhausted to realize at the moment that my life's purpose had been achieved"

He was in the position of many another man who has achieved some summit in life only to find that the glory and beauty of the pinnacle fades before the blindness of nervous and physical exhaustion.

A few hours' sleep, then he tugged his soiled diary from its little canvas bag and wrote:

"The Pole at last. The prize of three centuries. My dream and goal for twenty years. Mine at last! I cannot bring myself to realize it. It seems all so simple and commonplace."

The end of the rainbow!

But there was work to do even now. For well Peary knew the incredulity he would later meet. So he had a double team lashed to an empty sledge. With this he drove on ten miles; then several miles to one side. His idea was to encompass that mathematical point known as the North Pole within the geometrical figure outlined by his movements. Yet this was quite unnecessary. For character of going, and of the ice floes within sight for many miles about, indicated that there need be expected no change in the white desert for long distances in every direction.

The American flag was planted in the ice. Three cheers were joined in by all. Then Peary shook hands all around. The natives were delighted with the whole performance, though somewhat childishly disappointed to find no "Big Nail" visible in any direction. In a space among the ice blocks of a pressure ridge was deposited a glass bottle containing the following record:

90 N. Lat., North Pole,
April 6, 1909.

Arrived here today, 27 marches from C. Columbia. I have with me 5 men: Matthew Henson, colored;

AFTER THE POLE.

Peary with king dog of his polar team standing on deck of the *Roosevelt*.

Ootah, Egingwah, Seegloo, and Ookeah, Eskimos; 5 sledges and 38 dogs. My ship, the *S.S. Roosevelt*, is in winter quarters at C. Sheridan, 90 miles east of Columbia.

The expedition under my command which has succeeded in reaching the Pole is under the auspices of the Peary Arctic Club of New York City, and has been fitted out and sent north by the members and friends of the Club for the purpose of securing this geographical prize, if possible, for the honor and prestige of the United States of America.

The officers of the Club are Thomas H. Hubbard, of New York, President; Herbert Bridgman of New York, Secretary and Treasurer. I start back for Cape Columbia tomorrow.

I have today hoisted the national ensign of the United States of America at this place, which my observations indicate to be the North Polar axis of the earth, and have formally taken possession of the entire region, and adjacent, for and in the name of the President of the United States of America. I leave this record and United States flag in possession.

ROBERT E. PEARY,
United States Navy.

Peary's reactions at the Pole during the hours of his realization that he had won are full of dramatic interest. Yet the thrill fell far short of what he had anticipated, simply because he found himself too utterly exhausted in body and brain to grasp the full degree of intense feeling that he well knew at the moment he should be experiencing. Paradoxically, when there he could not rest due to "a con-

dition of mental exaltation which made further rest impossible."

After 30 hours of quartering and observations he wrote a final line. It was a post card to his wife. It read:

90 NORTH LATITUDE, April 7, 1909.

My Dear Jo: I have won out at last. Have been here a day. I start for home and you in an hour. Love to the kidsies."

The Eskimos received orders to pack and lash. They sprang to the task. Hourly they had been growing more concerned about the condition of leads to the south. With each day the temperature average would rise imperceptibly higher as the sun rose. And there was a point around minus 12 where sea-ice would not freeze solid enough to bear the marchers. That could mean but one thing, the thing so barely escaped in 1906: starvation. Peary would never see the Pole again and knew it:

"One backward glance I gave—then turned my face toward the south and toward the future."

The future—ah, how it beckoned!

For the long trek south was a cold and bitter penance still to pay for trespass on the grim seclusion of the North. And the biting wind penetrated the body of the man aged not only by years, but by past toil and present hardship. To the very marrow of his bones crept the chill searching fingers of the frost that had stilled the younger heart of many a more

vigorous explorer. But thought of the bright future sustained the plodding traveler. In the future would be no exposure to bitter cold. Indeed, there might be no cold at all if plans with "Jo" for a southern winter refuge worked out.

This thought and the querulous natives brought even brighter reflections about the soothing companionships to come. So many many years had been passed with only an unhappy white man or two and a score or so of childlike Eskimos as comrades. Through the gateway of this final triumph was visible at home a long vista of friendliness renewed, of often longed-for intimacies, of old acquaintances of youth that had been swept away on the flood of complex busyness life brings.

Hurry—hurry—

"We rushed on today, April 12th, lest we be caught when the rising gale breaks up the thin young ice. But dogs and men are showing the strain. . . ."

In the future, mused Peary as he plodded on, there would be no rush. The great task had been accomplished. In the mellow middle years there would be calmer movement: progress still, to be sure, but of a more subtle entity than that won through tormenting physical labor. There would be books to be written; reports to be made; interviews to be given; advice to be doled out; and participation in the thousand and one placid details of maturity.

Weather favored at last. With light loads and racing dogs the teams galloped onward. At six

o'clock on the morning of April 23rd the party reached the shore base of Cape Columbia. Ootah sank down on his sledge exclaiming: "The Almighty Devil is asleep or having trouble with his wife or we should never have come back so easily!" The others behaved as if they had gone crazy. They yelled and called and danced until they fell from utter exhaustion. Peary alone was quiet. His bloodshot, sunken eyes roamed the white dead coastline, the bleak hills, the melancholy desolation of all that lay about. How sweet, with each new thought, the future seemed; the future full of green valleys and fragrant flowers, soft scented twilight and the idle music of the bees.

The future—how it beckoned!

Then the thrill of reaching the ship and bathing one's filthy body after not even having undressed for three months; of devouring fresh meat and baked dainties, after the monotonous biscuit and pemmican; of listening to the haunting melodies of the phonograph; of joining in with the merry laughter that permeated the festive ship from end to end. But with it all came to Peary a secret lingering reservation that this was but a drop in the bucket to the clean, well-fed, jubilant months soon due which would stretch unending to years and years of the happiness he had so long dreamed of, and now not only due but well deserved.

The future—ah—

"You're the greatest man in the world, Commander, bar none!" exploded the loyal Captain Bob exuberantly; and he meant it. "The greatest

man—." No, not that. But one who was human. And one who had achieved a great goal after a lifetime of grim striving was one to be held in wide respect throughout the world of men. At last the doubters would be silenced: those who had said it was a fool's chase; those who had declared that the Smith Sound route could lead but to disaster.

The future!

All through the weeks before the ice broke and then while creeping breathlessly southward to leave for the last time the grinning Eskimos who called from their kayaks, "You always say you'll never come again, Big Peary!" never knowing that the only time they would ever hear their white Leader's voice again it would come from the dry throat of a talking machine. All breathlessly down the Labrador to the first little telegraph station at Indian Harbor whence broke upon the world the first news of the great Discovery: "Stars and Stripes nailed to the North Pole, Peary." And to Josephine: "Have made good at last. I have the Pole. Am well. Love."

Then upon the traveler descended tragedy such as few have suffered. To quote his own words of more than a year before, "Fortunately I did not know that Fate was even then clenching her fist for yet another more crushing blow."

The greatest hoax of all ages had just been perpetrated and Robert Peary was the victim.

The future still beckoned—but like a mirage in the desert, it had moved away just as the explorer's fingers reached to touch it.

CHAPTER XXII

PEARY AND THE PUBLIC

THREE grievous years followed all marred by an inescapable scandal to which Peary was an innocent party. The story of the Cook-Peary controversy needs no explanation or amendment here. While the whole episode has formed the basis of several books, it is of no consequence to our chronicle of a great explorer's life save in so far as it bore upon the course he pursued. The reader who would analyze relative claims of the two men may find in any large library suitable data on the subject. Destiny and human justice have already closed the incident so far as retribution goes. We must view the whole regrettable affair only as one more burden Fate chose to impose upon her man. Just as the facile pen may reason that Amundsen's priority at the South Pole so weakened Scott's morale that his party's death ensued, so may logic be adduced to show how anguish of Peary's bitterness at his betrayal may have led to his untimely death. But how futile are such vagaries when compared with the superb realities of achievement itself.

Briefly, Dr. Cook was in the North a year ahead

of Peary and, so he claimed, reached the North Pole in the spring of 1908. Having been with Peary in Greenland more than ten years before, he knew the Eskimos. With two natives he crossed Ellesmere Land, came round into Jones Sound and after wintering away from his base escaped down the Greenland coast in the spring of 1909. It was in every way an admirable trip, even though he never came closer than 400 miles to the Pole; and although he later spoiled the effect of his feat by declaring he had done even more. As the writer had a chance to travel nearly three years with the same two men accompanying Cook, the details of the latter's work have been well checked.

Dr. Cook had reached New York and was lecturing there on his alleged discovery of the North Pole when the *Roosevelt* steamed up the North River with Peary aboard during the early autumn of 1909. As the Hudson-Fulton Celebration was in progress Cook's performances provided one more attraction for the crowds that thronged the metropolis. He had already gained momentum by his recognition in Denmark; and he had been adroit enough in the face of Peary's announcement from Labrador to declare smugly that there was "glory enough for both."

To Peary's chagrin the American public sided largely with Cook. There were a variety of reasons for this curious lack of discernment on the part of the people, not the least of which was the fact that the press found Cook a more attractive fount of

bon mots and amiabilities. Peary's humiliation and confoundment that his own country should fail to see at once the full significance of it all only moved him contemptuously to turn a cold shoulder to the howlings of the mob. He reasoned correctly that few cared whether he or Cook had actually reached the Pole or not. Excitement lay largely in the fight itself. And when the "crowd" saw one participant too proud to fight the crowd howled its derision.

Peary's friends flocked to his support. But their numbers were microscopic as compared with the public at large. They could not stem the tide of ugly notoriety and ridicule with which the world began to view the whole proceedings.

The "*Future*" that had beckoned so, from a mirage became a debacle.

It is not true to say the public misunderstood Peary. The public had no particular desire to *understand* him. What they did understand was the spicy wrangling which was daily fed them through the nation's press. That editors wrote mostly with tongue in cheek, palpably delighted with the scandal proving such tasty pabulum for their feature writers, did not in the slightest abate the howling of the wolf-pack. And when abatement came the reason was only surfeit of a theme worn threadbare.

The paramount dispute throughout had been "Which—or both?"; never "He won after years of effort." The pity of it all began to be whispered in the still small voice of a nation's conscience only after numbing years had passed.

It is probable that so cruel an anticlimax to a lifetime of exploration could have happened in no other country than in America. In the first place, Peary's goal had never really captured popular imagination; whereas in England, for instance, generations of valor and of colonial aggrandizement lay behind the work of Shackleton and Scott. In America fifty years, lives and money wasted north preceded Peary. After the first glamour of his early showmanship had worn off there remained only the shell of high resolve and hackneyed phrase to indicate the form of his aspiration.

To the man in the American street the North Pole was an abstraction. The closer Peary and others got to the top of the world the more obvious it became that no economic or commercial profit could ever be gleaned therefrom. The more times the old story of bitter cold and snow, of hardship and denial, was told the more frequently rose the exasperated protest: "But what's the sense of it all?" And there wasn't any answer that the man in the street could understand. There wasn't any answer that a great multitude of scientists and scholars could understand.

Nearly always the answer was couched in glittering generalities. Roosevelt, for instance, for all the vigor and penetration of his mind, spoke mostly of the courage and tenacity that Peary had shown in the work rather than of the results of the work itself. Of the latter his most lucid words were:

"Commander Peary has made all dwellers in the civilized world his debtors; but, above all, we his

fellow Americans are his debtors. He has performed one of the great feats of our time; he has won high honor for himself and for his country; and we welcome his own story of the triumph which he won in the immense solitudes of the wintry North."

But Roosevelt doesn't touch on the blunt query "*What was the use of it all?*"

Peary generally avoids the theme in his writings. More often he switched attention to the spiritual servitude suffered by a man who had once done northern work. "The lure of the North!" Peary called it.

"More than once I have come back from the great frozen spaces, battered and worn and baffled, sometimes maimed, telling myself that I had made my last journey thither, eager for the society of my kind, the comforts of civilization, and the peace and serenity of home. But somehow, it was never many months before the old restless feeling came over me, and I began to long for the great white desolation, the battles with the ice and the gales, the long, long Arctic night, the handful of odd but faithful Eskimos who had been my friends for years, the silence and the vastness of the great, white lonely North. And back I went accordingly, time after time, until at last my dream of years came true."

Then from the material world would come the same old question:

"But what did the fellows who put up the money get out of it?"

"Yes—how about that?" from several directions at once.

A deep breath and the explorer would reply: "They had the satisfaction of contributing to one of the greatest achievements of modern times."

Again the query: "We know, but *what did they get out of it?*"

Peary of course knew the kind of answer that would have satisfied. If he could have named a figure in dollars and cents that would represent the first bond issue on a Polar Ice Company or reckoned a healthy tariff on Eskimo trade his hecklers would have ceased their half-derisive questions. But he couldn't because that side of polar exploration had not yet come.

It was not until he got into aviation some years later that he went seriously into the commercial aspect of the Far North. "I found coal in Ellesmere Land," he said, referring to the 1898 trip. "Every year more coal and oil is being found north of the Arctic Circle." (The Navy now has large reserves in Alaska, and Greenland has supplied several expeditions with coal.) "The North may yet be one of the great fuel centers of the world."

Another issue that Peary brought forward was the idea of a trans-polar air route. He pictured Europe and Asia as two great reservoirs of trade. He pointed out that today they are connected by long thin pipes of traffic via Panama and Suez. It was not an exaggeration when he said that commerce only trickles through these pipes.

He would then go on to paint a picture of a huge orifice, short and wide, by air across the Pole. He

admitted that it taxed the imagination; yet no more than did the dreams of early friends of steam-cars when they visioned our continent girt with railway lines. His idea was that when trans-polar traffic came it would come with a rush. The fact that for 400 years men had been struggling out over the Polar Sea by sledge did not prevent his bright mind's eye from seeing a great commercial flood back and forth by air through a new "Panama Canal" in the north.

Peary used to love to tell the story of Mr. Gladstone on the occasion of the great statesman's visit to Faraday, the English electrician. Gladstone listened courteously while the spark-guardian explained one simple mechanism in his laboratory. Then grimly he asked, just as Peary was asked, "But what is the good of it all?" Whereat the unabashed Faraday descended to the parliamentarian's level and replied: "Why, sir, presently you will be able to tax it!"

Mr. Bridgman, lifelong friend, one day demurred at the caustic tone of Peary's exasperated response to the same inquiry for the hundredth time or so. "But you must remember," Bridgman put it as tactfully as he could, "that in your position you are always more or less at the mercy of what the great majority think. Even with all you have done your standing is in one sense that fixed by public opinion."

"*Public opinion be damned!*" retorted Peary tartly.

Unhappily the words were overheard. They got about. Newspaper men who had suffered from Peary's natural brusqueness passed them along. And

in time the bonds of admiration and respect between him and his public that had been so strongly forged in 1895 were strained.

In later years, after the hullabaloo of the "Controversy" had died away, a fairer view of what his work stood for began to come. It was not that there was more tangible evidence of his having accomplished anything of commercial importance. Rather was it a case of the public becoming more sophisticated in scientific matters.

Progress in radio and aviation was the great and shining human achievement of the decade following the discovery of the North Pole. Both quickly caught the imagination of the public. As a result the truth gradually filtered through the public mind that for generations patient investigators had been laying the foundations for this spectacular advance in physics and mechanics. Rarely had the investigators known what they were after. They were mostly engaged only in adding to man's "cosmic knowledge." But it was their basic pioneering work that made the final achievements possible.

Thus a more tolerant attitude grew up toward Peary. It was more clearly seen that he had bravely, though blindly, done his share to extend human knowledge. It was seen more clearly that all we have and in a large measure are we owe to scientific men. Here and there editors began to admit that "without them (scientists and explorers) we should likely still be in the stone age, killing our meat with flint weapons and devouring it raw."

By the time Peary traveled and lectured in 1917 in the patriotic interests of war measures he found his public mellowed toward him.

In his lecturing he passed through three periods, to judge from his methods of delivery: First, he was the silver-tongued showman in the nineties, young and inspired, with many natural graces on the platform; second, he became the grim veteran of a desperate enterprise who had fought a losing fight in the North and at home, revealing the anguish of his disappointments in the harshly bald descriptions that he gave; which in the coldness of his delivery lost him rapidly the audiences his bank account so needed; third, in the last few years he lived, the poised speaker tempered by adversity and charming in the mantle of romance that he wore.

Yet to the end he was never a winsome character before his public. He was spoken of as *grim—square-jawed—dogmatic—blunt.* He had not that histrionic knack of winning the odd companion to him by mellifluous nonentities of conversation. Possibly this human trait had atrophied within him during the long lonely months and years when not even a sympathetic Eskimo could share the burden of his discouragement. More likely, though, he never had had the trait since youth. Such was the mood of seclusion that hung over the establishment of Mary Peary and her son during the boy's formative years.

Bitter criticism was leveled at Peary to the day of his death for not having taken Bob Bartlett clear to the Pole. Loyally Bartlett on every possible occa-

sion afterward declared that it had never been planned for him to go to the Pole. Up to the very end there mutually existed between the two men the friendliest feelings and the deepest admiration. The matter of Bartlett's not getting to the Pole was part and parcel of the system that made the Pole possible. Of Bartlett's turning back Peary wrote:

"Though he was naturally disappointed at not having reached the 88th parallel, he had every reason to be proud, not only of his work in general, but that he had surpassed the Italian record by a degree and a quarter. I had given him the post of honor in command of my last supporting party for three reasons: first, because of his magnificent handling of the *Roosevelt;* second, because he had cheerfully and gladly stood between me and every possible minor annoyance from the start of the expedition to that day; third, because it seemed to me right that, in view of the noble work of Great Britain in Arctic exploration, a British subject should, next to an American, be able to say that he had stood nearest the Pole."

It is not to defend Peary that we go into detail; nor to lay great stress on an incident that was but one of scores in Peary's life which demonstrated not only the ill-luck that so consistently followed him, but also the want of acumen he sometimes showed in dealing with his public. One is impulsively inclined to condemn the public in each case. But on reflection one cannot but see that it was Peary who failed rather than the public.

The "public," as we call it, is simply the mass mind of a hurried, harried multitude of human beings

who are expected to support or condemn with great vigor everything under the sun. How absurd this expectation is becomes clear when we come to evaluate the mass mind and its attainments. The great mass mind of America knows and thinks most about marriage, money and sports. Exploration doesn't touch marriage; and it is largely a loss when judged by money standards. Hence, it has usually been looked upon as a sporting proposition.

One of the ground rules of American sport is that which makes team-work the *sine qua non* of victory. But team work imposes team spirit on its players. The team captain is traditionally supposed to dispute his right to the lion's share of the glory and wins fresh honor by every show of self-abnegation.

With the British and Norwegian explorers this "team spirit" was always adroitly played up for all it was worth. And surely there was a true sincerity in it for it was the close bonds of elbow-to-elbow labor throughout the sledging of all other expeditions that made success possible.

Hence the American public not only had their fixed idea about Arctic work being truly a species of sport, but they were educated to feel that their criterion was fully applicable to Peary's work. Didn't the European leaders play up their good men at any and every opportunity? A fair question though ignoring the fact that Bartlett was in 1909 a British subject.

But alas, the mass mind failed to see the difference between Peary's problem and those of other explorers.

And Peary likewise failed to perceive the streak of grim stubbornness within him that refused to cater to the capricious mass mind which cared far more for cloying sentiment than it did for all the theoretical glory and prestige in history. A single photograph of Bob Bartlett and Bert Peary shaking hands on the top of the world would likely have spiked the Cook hoax and made Peary the man of the hour in 1909.

Another aspect of Peary's failure to hold the public was his extraordinary veracity. A queer implication, no doubt. But in going back over records of other explorers it is almost impossible to find one that did not consciously or unconsciously exaggerate. It is so easy to create a false impression among those at home who are not familiar with Arctic work. It is so safe and simple to fill in one's tale with details that make it vivid and alluring, yet which are no more true than the narrative of a novelist who knows his atmosphere and manufactures his episodes to fit. Peary never succumbed to this temptation. When he had gone his sledging limit he took the best sight he could, made the best notes his weary brain would permit, built the highest cairn his exhausted muscles could manage, and came home. This statement has been proved literally scores of times. To the popular mind it means little; the popular mind loves to be duped. A New England conscience combined with a puritanical literalness condemned Peary to a colorless veracity time after time when by stretching a point or two he might have won the popular support he so needed.

"Why do I espouse such causes?" exclaimed Henry Cabot Lodge once when accused of stooping to attachments beneath a man of his calibre. "The answer is that political expediency is a harsh master. Petty intrigue, I am ashamed to admit, is often unavoidable in accomplishment of the ultimate purpose."

Petty intrigue Peary could not stoop to, though it need have cost him nothing in character nor in fame. For petty intrigue, provided there is no flavor of dishonesty in it, consists only of that undercurrent of human readjustment which pervades all business, and without which there can be no smooth reconciliation of ideas and temperaments. What innate tact Peary once possessed was masked increasingly with the years by his bluff manner and stern visage. That this outward shell had been forged by the terrific struggle of a lifetime only those nearest him were prone to remember. The rest of the world was inclined to shrug and turn its back even when his claims stood finally established by the best scientific talent of the world.

Peary was always reticent about his unpopularity with his public. Secretly embittered as he may have been, he was not the man to whine about it. Well he knew he had won his victory and that posterity must give him his due. And even if he needed the wine of his fellows' applause he had only to turn to the dinners and receptions that came so frequently in every year that he lived after 1909.

For instance, he was toastmaster at the banquet to Amundsen on the occasion of the Discovery of the

South Pole. The National Geographic Society was host. Official Washington turned out *en masse*, and there was a brilliant gathering of representatives from other cities as well. At the speakers' table sat Peary next to the Norwegian hero. His ruddy grizzled face stood out in bold relief among the more urbane and rounded masks on either side. Even Amundsen's seemed more that of a mystic and a happy mariner when compared with the hard-bitten visage of the American. But when Peary rose and filled the great banquet hall with his resonant voice and fluent speech, when he dripped wit and pungent phrase with the mastery of a born orator, those present gave unstintingly of their applause. Could he only have relaxed this way before his lecture audiences and with the journalists who besieged him his later years might have been infinitely brighter.

Like all explorers and leaders he had to combat the innuendoes of those who had been with him in the North and had not measured up. No word of censure can we find among his writings. But naturally those on the other side were placed in a position of defensive humiliation when their caustic statements were one by one disproved through subsequent achievement on the part of the man they condemned.

The trouble is that the North can poison a white man's mind. Arctic neurasthenia is a common malady among the Danish in South Greenland. Few expeditions have escaped insanity in some form or other. When the leader portions out skins and food

and fuel he may be measuring the life span of his men. Fuel and food can be allotted with geometrical nicety. Skins and Eskimo assistants, routes, weather, and the like cannot. Only too often the white driver fights a blizzard, freezes, starves, thirsts, and sometimes dies, all the while cursing his leader for the fractional partiality he seemed to have shown in assigning garments or the course of this particular trip. Many in Peary's command used to return hating him in a way that murder couldn't gratify. Every Arctic leader has had the same experience. When the antidote of normal life neutralizes the poison, this bitterness is gradually dissolved. But by that time all are separated and again engaged at home in their individual pursuits. While north, when friendly spirit is the one human bond, only the strongest character can rise above the terrible mental depression and irritableness which isolation and physical suffering bring. Peary could; he had the incentive. But those with him year after year could not. Only by magnificent patience and forbearance was he able to hold his authority over them with sufficient strength to utilize their aid until return south. After that he was at their mercy, and the mercy of that portion of the public who chose to believe his late companions' plaints.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONGRESSIONAL FIREWORKS

WHEN Morse invented his telegraph he nearly starved to death. Congress hesitated six years before it would appropriate $30,000 to test his device. In all that august body there was wanting a majority to envision what successful swift communication would mean to a distance-hampered world. Action was delayed by one Congressman who eloquently proposed an amendment that half the money be set aside for an investigation of mesmerism. And finally the vote passed by only 89 to 83.

Polar exploration was treated in much the same vein half a century later. Peary had two major contacts with Congress. In one he had to prove that he had been to the Pole. This was at once a comical and a humiliating experience.

"How many pounds of nails did you take to the Pole for repair of your sledges?" asked one investigator.

Had an Eskimo been asked that question he would have roared with laughter in the face of his questioner. For one thing in the word that would be

fatal to sledges on the Polar Sea is nails. But Peary did not even smile.

The other encounter Peary had "on the hill" was when the main fight went on for his advancement. This time his friends bore the brunt of the attack. And this time it was not only a case of embroiling Congress but of wrangling with the strong Navy lobby in Washington. Promptly many of the regular line officers, as well as those in Peary's own Corps, strenuously objected to his advancement on the ground that there was no substantial reason for his being promoted over their heads.

The second campaign ended on March 4, 1911, when in recognition of the attainment of the Pole and of the appreciation of his countrymen, President Taft signed the Act of Congress promoting and retiring Peary with the rank and pay of Rear Admiral and tendering to him the thanks of Congress.

Briefly the events leading up to contact with Congress were as follows: On his return from the North Peary released to the press a succinct account of his discovery of the Pole. This was followed by a more detailed story in *Hampton's Magazine;* and finally by his book *The North Pole* published by Stokes.

These accounts, of course, only added fuel to the controversy raging at the time. So when the Peary Arctic Club contemplated a request to Congress for "appropriate honors" to be dealt out to the explorer it was deemed advisable to have his achievement examined in detail by some competent and non-

partisan body. General Hubbard, the President of the Club, and others were canny enough to see that once in Congress the whole enterprise might be exploited by eager opportunists, and be used by them as a shuttle with which to weave their own political fortunes.

The examination by the National Geographic Society was held in Washington during late October, 1909. It was but another of the shameful trials that Peary had to undergo as a result of the grotesque position a cruel Fate had put him in. Yet he submitted willingly and with good grace. For the aching bitterness in his heart one could not blame him. Through nearly the whole of his lifetime the man had played the game as cleanly as it could be played. And now in the hour of his triumph he was being cross-questioned like a common rogue. Yet he had no dignified alternative. So he went before the tribunal selected by a Society whose officers have always been largely distinguished Government officials.

According to the official record:

"At a meeting of the board of managers of the National Geographic Society, Wednesday morning, October 20, 1909, the records, observations and proofs of Commander Robert E. Peary that he reached the Pole April 6, 1909, were submitted to the Society. The records and observations were immediately referred to the Committee on Research, with the direction that the chairman appoint a subcommittee of experts, of which he shall be a member, to examine records and report on them to the board."

Such red tape! Such superfluous circumlocution! Such persiflage! When the man on trial had not it in him to commit the crime at which all this procedure was aimed. Yet Peary knew there was no other way. And the members of the Society knew there was no other way.

"Mr. Henry Gannett, chairman of the committee on research, immediately appointed as the other members of the committee Rear Admiral Colby M. Chester, United States Navy, and O. H. Tittmann, Superintendent of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. This committee of the society will personally examine the notebooks and original observations made by Commander Peary in his march to the Pole and see all the papers as brought back from the field. The committee will report the results of its findings at a special meeting of the Board to be called for that purpose."

And so on through reams of foolscap and pitiable weeks of time.

The whole thing was finally accomplished and an itemized report produced that fully and finally established the scientific accuracy of Peary's claims. During the winter advances were made to Congress for action in Peary's favor. But there were still many doubters. Many more persisted in choosing a middle ground, unwilling to take a courageous stand for or against him.

A sample of the objections held against his recognition as an American worthy of high official honors may be cited in the way he was scored for the unsea-

going nature of his work. Both in the Senate and in the House it was pointed out that he had not been active in his naval profession. No view could have been more unjust. Few naval officers have had to face afloat the gauntlet of perils and difficulties Peary had run on every voyage north.

It was claimed that he was on leave, until orders were brought forward signed personally by President McKinley sending him to duty in the polar regions.

It was claimed that his voyages were stunts backed by a few, and having no authentic connection with any true governmental activity until there was brought forward a letter from the Department of Commerce, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, dated July 9, 1908, reading in part as follows:

"Sir: In pursuance to the orders of the President, transmitted through the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, you will please have tidal observations made along the Grant Land shore of the Polar Sea, during your projected cruise in the *Roosevelt*. . . ."

All of which was fully and ably carried out. One objection after another was brought forward to prevent Congressional action of any sort that would make of Peary an official hero. Each objection was met with positive proof refuting it. But two objections seemed to spring up where one had been before. Congress resolutely refused to be led into definite action.

In March, 1910, Senator Hale definitely introduced a bill into Congress for the promotion of

Peary. It was pointed out specifically that Peary himself was not seeking Government recognition, but that his wide circle of influential friends would be intensely gratified if it were given; and that its form should certainly be commensurate with our national dignity, a factor that put the reward beyond pure monetary considerations.

In furthering this bill Senator Hale made it clear that to give Peary additional rank was not a true promotion owing to the fact that had he not taken up Arctic work he would have been a rear admiral by this time anyway, just as contemplated by the bill. There were already three other officers in the Civil Engineering Corps bearing the rank of Rear Admiral.

One must remember that at this time the staff officers of the Navy comprised the Medical Corps, Pay Corps, Chaplains, Naval Constructors and the Civil Engineers. By giving Peary the rank of Rear Admiral he would not interfere in any way with the line, or straight naval officers' promotions; yet he would have certain pay and privileges accrue to him which would be the reward in substance his friends so hoped to have him get.

While these details were being explained to the various members of Congress in speeches and memorandums, a special Sub-Committee on Private Bills of the Committee of Naval Affairs in the House of Representatives was directed to receive and examine proofs that Peary had actually reached the Pole. Thomas S. Butler headed this committee, assisted

by Roberts, Gregg and Macon. The group began sessions at once and fireworks promptly started.

Meanwhile the Hale Bill was favorably reported on in the Senate calling for higher rank and the thanks of Congress. Apparently the Senate were more enlightened or required less debate to make up their minds on Arctic matters.

The Committee first engaged itself in trying to get at the "facts" of the discovery. With a disdain of technicalities it plunged headlong into the fray. As the prior investigation by the National Geographic Society seemed a good place to begin, members of that group were called.

Mr. Tittmann declared that the line of soundings which Peary furnished showed that he had been within five miles of the Pole, in addition to the observations that were presented and accepted as fully satisfactory. All of the latter, save those in the last few miles of the journey, were fully duplicated and confirmed by the work of Bartlett, Marvin and others. Mr. Tittmann also pointed out that Peary's expedition differed from all previous ones in this, that when he got within striking distance of his objective—that is, within about 140 miles of the Pole—he had with him a large party of men besides Captain Bartlett; that up to this time he had kept himself in absolute reserve, allowing the hard work, the pioneer work, to be done by younger and stronger men. Then when he reached his final point of attack, practically in the neighborhood of his goal, he had with him sledges in perfect condition and plenty of

dogs, drivers and provisions to make the final dash up and back.

Details and figures of sights and navigational methods were then gone into until one member confessed that he was "ready for St. Elizabeth's!" This labor not only failed to advance the thesis rapidly but thoroughly dissatisfied the journalists assigned to "cover the story." Hence, so it is alleged, the Committee took the advice of one of the older newspaper men and shunted the inquiry into channels far more suggestive of human interest.

These new channels consisted largely of *what* Peary did and *how* he did it at or about the time he actually presented the figures to the original Geographic Committee. Specific polar research was ignored. Mr. Gannett, one of the great geographers of our age, testified: "Mr. Peary came from his home in Portland, Maine, and brought his records in a gripsack and his instruments in a trunk."

At this profound statement the Committee felt itself again in depths at which it could feel the bottom underfoot. "Yes, yes," averred the Chairman with a sentient frown. "And then?"

"First, he met the Committee at the Geographic Society and we appointed a meeting at the house of Admiral Chester," continued Mr. Gannett. "We simply sat down with him and read his journal from his original records; he had an original record in a little book, a notebook, you know. . . ."

And so on for days: not hours, but *days*. While the future that Peary had dreamed of through all the

long, hard years slipped still further on, like the mirage it was.

When politics mercifully intervened upon these sorry proceedings the Committee adjourned until the following winter. Meanwhile the ugly scandal went on just as long as readers cared to accept it as part of their daily diet in the press. But President Taft and the Secretary of the Navy were not to be stampeded by dissimulation. The latter mentioned the Discovery of the Pole in his annual report. The President spoke of it in his message to Congress in December. Possibly both these facts helped reopen the subject after New Year's.

But when the Committee met again to continue their investigation a new line of attack had opened up. Naval officers in Washington who felt that their interests might be jeopardized by Peary's promotion came forward with vigorous contention against the plan. It was claimed that he would be jumped over the heads of officers his seniors and slow up promotion of those who were to come after him. It was demonstrated that a dangerous precedent would be created that might ultimately lead to a whole "Corps of Heroes."

Against these carping arguments were pointed out many historic items that gradually won the perplexed investigators to Peary's side. The cases of Admiral Melville, General Wood and others were cited as similar. Further, it was recalled that Great Britain had many times rewarded her explorers with rank and money. Alexander Mackenzie was knighted

in 1802 for having discovered the Mackenzie River. William Edward Parry was given a prize of £5,000 offered by Parliament to the first commander to take a ship across longitude 110° West. Robert McClure was knighted and received a grant of £10,000 for being the first to accomplish the Northwest Passage in 1850. And so on through a long list.

This line of opposition having failed, Peary's antagonists in his own profession took up another mode of attack. It was pointed out that he had been absent from duty after his leave had expired and that after he had returned from the North he had failed to take his regular walking test. This test was an annual affair and consisted of searching physical examinations after an officer had walked at least fifty miles in three days. In the autumn of 1910 the Navy Department set aside the former complaint, but made note of the latter.

"You are directed, therefore," it wrote Peary, "to take one of the prescribed tests (physical) which, when successfully accomplished, will be accredited to you for the calendar year ending December 31, 1909. It will also be necessary for you to take a second test for the current calendar year. The two tests will be taken at the earliest practicable date."

The affront of it—after having walked more than 1,000 miles in that same year over the broken, jagged ice-floes with burning feet and freezing toes!

A few staunch souls among the line officers came forward and made their position plain. One, the late Rear Admiral Charles D. Sigsbee, U.S.N.,

Captain of the *U.S.S. Maine* when she was blown up, wrote:

"My dear Peary: I have just heard that you are to be nominated for Rear Admiral, or with the rank of Rear Admiral. No matter which way is proposed I stand for confirmation if the proper authorities approve. You have made good, my dear Peary, and have brought immense prestige to our Service. We can only be honored in our grade of Rear Admiral by your addition to our list. Your long years of endeavor and your final success, as against heart-breaking conditions, are magnificent. I wish you success."

Bolstered by renewed signs of friendship in unexpected quarters, and justly infuriated by the petty steps resorted to in order to humiliate him, Peary took his walking tests just before Christmas in 1910. Instead of being the "old man" he was alleged to be, he surpassed records made by many younger men. On the first day he walked 25 miles in 6 hours; on the second, 25 miles in 7½ hours; and on the third day completed the test by passing the fifty-mile mark. Just after Christmas he chose the riding test instead of walking. On the 28th he rode 50 miles in less than 5 hours; on the 29th, 50 miles in 4¾ hours; on the 30th, 10 miles in 38 minutes; a total of 110 miles in 10 hours and 16 minutes. Both of these tests were made without training and in weather scarcely conducive to such performance by a man not in the pink of physical condition.

The examining Committee submitted to pressure

by many Americans by reconvening for further examination of the Peary bill on January 7, 1911. This time Peary himself was made to stand the brunt of the questions. Mr. Macon was particularly severe in his heckling questions. But it was to Peary's everlasting credit that no amount of disagreeable and humiliating quizzing could shake him out of his dignified stand.

Mr. Roberts led much of the proceedings. As a fair sample of the huge mass of testimony the following is quoted from the official record now on file in Washington: (Mr. Roberts to Peary):

"How many hours would you say as the best estimate you can give you were there with that Committee?" (*i.e.*, the original Geographic Society Committee which examined Peary and his records.)

"I should say that I was there the greater portion of the day."

"Do you recall when it was that you were there? Do you recall the month or the day?"

"It was some time in October."

"Did you bring with you to Admiral Chester's house your instruments?"

"No."

"Where were they?"

"At the station."

"Did the Committee see those instruments?"

"They did."

"Did they see them? Where did they see them?"

"At the station."

"Did you go with them?"

"I did."

"Do you recall what time you got to the station?"

"No, sir, I do not, except that it was pretty well along in the evening."
"It was after dark?"
"It was after dark."

And on and on. . . . Until one wonders how Peary kept his sanity and his poise. "But I saw the humor of it!" he declared afterward. Few men have been dealt with like a criminal on trial for crime, when the chief crime was that of bringing enduring honor to the country whose legislators were so busily engaged in such abysmal persiflage.

The press divided. As a sample of both sides we take at random a paragraph from the *Washington Post* of February 16:

"The appointment of Peary to be a Rear Admiral of the line would be a burlesque of the title, cheapening it, ridiculing him, and humiliating actual officers of the Navy. Let the title 'Rear Admiral, U.S.N.' be reserved for those who are actually entitled to it."

Another writer on the other side of the fence was equally enthusiastic in support of the opposite view:

". . . His methods (*i.e.*, Peary's) under the circumstances warrant the study of every navy man. His success deserves his country's most genuine praise. And the heroic tenacity of purpose that finally won him the goal of his life's endeavor, must be justly added where it belongs—to the capital of traditional naval valor."

Then, on February 12, 1911, General Thomas Hubbard took a hand in proceedings. He had a good

friend in Mr. D. S. Alexander, Representative of New York in the 61st Congress, and Chairman of the Committee on Rivers and Harbors. He proved a medium through which the Peary Arctic Club could keep its fingers on the pulse of the Investigating Committee.

On February 23 came the final big gun of Peary's "enemies," who weren't enemies save in so far as they read into all the explorer's actions an underlying scheme to encroach on the rights of others. They filed charges in Washington that the men who built the *Roosevelt* back in 1905 had never been paid. Affidavits had been brought to prove the case. But the infamous effort at blackmail proved abortive after its perpetrators were promptly run down and threatened with imprisonment if they continued.

It was early in March that the Committee made its final report which was approved by the President and carried into effect, on April 25, 1911, more than two years after the Flag had been planted at the apex of our globe. The report read as follows:

"Your committee believe that in view of his long distinguished service in the Arctic regions in ascertaining the northern boundaries of Greenland, his soundings and tidal observations; his ascertainment of facts concerning the northern Arctic Ocean; the general information he has obtained by living over 12 years within the Arctic circle; and finally having successfully followed a carefully laid plan resulting in his reaching on April 6, 1909, and bringing back to civilization the conditions existing at the North Pole, that Robert Edwin Peary has performed a most

remarkable and wonderful service, that he has attracted the favorable attention of the civilized world; and that, therefore, the American people, through its Congress, shall render him thanks, and bestow upon him the highest rank of the service which he adorns."

CHAPTER XXIV

EUROPE'S VERDICT

BY the end of March, 1910, the Congressional Investigating Committee had thoroughly decided to rest on its laurels so far as deciding anything definite about the North Pole was concerned. Meanwhile pressure had redoubled for Peary to visit Europe and appear before some of the societies who wished to hear his story first-hand. At the instance of the State Department the Navy Department granted leave for a trip abroad. By April 22 full arrangements had been made from Washington through the diplomatic representatives of the various countries concerned and Peary sailed a few days later. He spent about five weeks abroad, returning on the *Mauretania* thoroughly tired out about the middle of June. His letter, of which he sent copies to our Ambassadors in London, Berlin, Vienna and Rome at the conclusion of his trip, so concisely recounts what he had gone through that it is worth quoting here:

DEAR SIR:

In view of my position as an officer of the United States Government, and knowing what erroneous

impressions are easily gained from incomplete and inaccurate information (obtained from Press or from conversation), I have thought it might be well, as a matter of record, for me to give you, as United States Ambassador, accurate information in regard to my present visit to Europe.

My sole and primary object in making a European trip this Spring has been to accept the complimentary invitations of various Geographical Societies, to address them upon my discovery of the North Pole.

I have received invitations from organizations of that character, as follows:—

The Royal Geographical Society of London.

The Royal Scottish Geographical Society of Edinburgh.

The Geographical Society of Glasgow.

The Geographical Society of Manchester.

The Imperial Geographical Society of Berlin.

The Royal Italian Geographical Society of Rome.

The Imperial Austrian Geographical Society of Vienna.

The Hungarian Geographical Society of Budapest.

The Royal Belgian Geographical Society of Brussels.

The Royal Geographical Society of Antwerp.

The Royal Netherlands Geographical Society of Amsterdam.

Other invitations received by me, but which I have been unable to accept, owing to the limited time, have been:—

The Swiss Geographical Society of Geneva.

The Geographical Society of Dresden.

The Geographical Society of Leipzig.

The Geographical Society of Stuttgart.

The Geographical Society of Tyneside.

The Geographical Society of Liverpool.

My addresses to Geographical Societies have been

without remuneration. In some cases the Societies have kindly considered me as their guest during my stay in the respective cities, and have placed hotel accommodation at my disposal. In other places this has not been done.

In all cases I have met all my other expenses, traveling and otherwise.

In addition to these honorary addresses before the various Societies, I have, in answer to urgent requests, delivered in Great Britain four public lectures on a commercial basis, and one in Berlin. The receipts from these lectures will just about pay the expenses of my round trip from America and back.

The honors received by me in Europe have been as follows:—

The Special Great Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society of London. (A special and extraordinary honor from this leading Geographical Society of the world.)

The Kachtigall Gold Medal of the Imperial German Geographical Society. (The highest honor of this Society.)

The King Humbert Gold Medal of the Royal Italian Geographical Society. (The highest honor of this Society).

The Hauer Medal of the Imperial Austrian Geographical Society. (The highest honor of this Society.)

The Gold Medal of the Hungarian Geographical Society. (The first and only Gold Medal ever awarded by this Society.)

The Gold Medal of the Royal Belgian Geographical Society. (The highest honor of this Society.)

The Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society of Antwerp. (The highest honor of this Society.)

A Special Trophy from the Royal Scottish Geographical Society—a replica in silver of the ships used by Hudson, Baffin and Davis. (A special and unusual honor from this Society.)

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from the Edinburgh University.

Honorary Membership in the Manchester Geographical Society.

Honorary Membership in the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society of Amsterdam.

I trust you will not think that I am intruding unnecessarily upon your valuable time and attention. The above statement will serve as a definite record in the practically certain event that garbled and erroneous statements in regard to me come to your attention.

Two points are to be noted. First, that my trip has been in no sense of the word a money-making affair; and second, that it has perhaps made something of an addition to our national prestige. In every place I have been most warmly received, and in all congratulatory remarks there has been the strongest note of tribute to the work as a national accomplishment of the United States.

Again permit me to thank you for your courtesies, and believe me,

Sincerely,

R. E. PEARY.

With characteristic urbanity the British had a representative to meet the distinguished guest when he reached their country. A suite of rooms had been engaged in London and complex plans made for the full utilization of the explorer's time. Yet there was

throughout his stay a kind deference to his wishes in the matter of just how far he cared to go with his more general contacts. For instance, though the profit lying in a commercial lecture tour throughout the countries was strongly represented it was foregone. Peary felt keenly that it would be inadvisable to enter such a field. It was very much more dignified and appropriate to confine his appearance as far as possible to the formal lectures and presentations that had been officially arranged. This at once disarmed those at home who sought to discredit his motives in going abroad.

On May 4th was held the gathering of notables that assembled to hear Peary's talk before the Royal Geographical Society in Albert Hall, London. There it was that he received the Society's great gold medal designed by Lady Scott, wife of Captain Robert Falcon Scott. This medal was presented in person by Major Leonard Darwin, President of the Society.

"I am honored," said he, "to hand you this symbol of our admiration for one who has been the first human being to lead a party of his fellow creatures to a Pole of the earth."

Peary, always effective on the platform, spoke exceptionally well that evening. He was customarily a "direct" talker in that he preferred to stick to the meat of his theme. But his delivery was animated. And with his height and splendid presence he cut a fine figure before his British cousins. His hearers

AT EDINBURGH.

Peary with the Vice Chancellor of the University, Sir William Turner.

were not charmed as they might have been by a less rugged character with a story less inspiring to tell. Rather were they deeply moved by the simple but inspiring recital of classic facts.

To the writer, a British naval officer, one who had been in that night's audience, said:

"We all knew much more about the arctic than most of you Americans do because we have tried so hard and lost so much up there. So when Peary spun his yarn we looked upon his face that had been etched by the wind and cold and we seemed to hear the composite voice of all our own heroes that had gone before. Nobody could have done it better than Peary."

On the day following was held the public lecture in London. The English are a seafaring race and they quickly recognized a mariner among them. They gave the speaker a great ovation on his appearance, and leaned forward to drink in every word while he spoke. For more than a century their own men had been failing and dying in the Far North where this man had won. There was a touch of nobility in the way they cheered the victor.

Many were the temptations to tarry longer in England: a shooting trip to Scotland; a yachting party off Portsmouth; a journey of sightseeing; and so on. But the schedule already made was a rigorous one and had to be followed without delay.

Peary went direct to Berlin, arriving there early on the 7th. That same evening he lectured before the Imperial Geographical Society of Germany. He

spoke in English, but was closely followed by the audience, most of whom understood the tongue he used. It was noteworthy that the reports and translations of this talk which appeared in the press next day were both accurate and admirable.

From Berlin the tour continued down the continent, taking in the capital of each country in rapid succession. Everywhere the spirit of the reception accorded the visitor was the same: enthusiastic but dignified; wholly without suspicion, yet thoroughly and appropriately critical. Even the populace in each metropolis, whose collective imagination had been aroused by the wild reports of the polar controversy, were uniformly polite and applauded vigorously whenever the Discoverer appeared.

The lecture before the Royal Italian Geographical Society was held in Rome on May 15. The King of Italy in person presented the King Humbert gold medal of the Society. Eyewitnesses said that the kindly King exhibited his admiration without restraint. He took Peary's hand and peered up into the weatherbeaten face that had for nearly a generation borne the brunt of the polar blizzards; slowly he shook his head and murmured: *"D'Abruzzi might have done it, but a greater man has triumphed!"*

The festive Italians would not let the American leave without something more than the cold formality of lecturing and official receptions. A huge banquet was prepared and all the popular notables from miles around invited. Simultaneous gayety went on in the city among those who could not be crowded into

the main affair. The Mayor of Rome, the presiding host, acquitted himself magnificently by extolling Peary both in English and in Italian.

Probably the most vivid reception of all occurred in the then rich and gracious Vienna where Peary was received and decorated by the Imperial Austrian Geographical Society. He was presented with the Society's highest medal of honor by its president, Professor Oberhummer, who spoke glowingly of Austria's profound interest in geographical work though it had been denied her to achieve what the more seafaring Anglo-Saxons had. As in Italy, Peary had here also an audience with the ruler. Francis Joseph threw off his cloak of rigidity long enough to greet the American with kindly and generous praise for what he had achieved.

Francis Joseph again saw Peary in Budapest, this time as King of Hungary. And on the evening of May 20 the lecture was repeated before the Imperial Hungarian Geographical Society, which presented its gold medal as had done the others.

And so on from one city to another, until pressure of invitations that could not be eluded brought Peary back again to England late in May. The University of Edinburgh now received him; also the Royal Scottish Geographical society. He was given a degree at the University and a medal by the Society. But, best of all, he was taken into the midst of men who admired him from their hearts for what he had done, and who had from the first refused to listen to any tales of perfidy. It was here that Peary received a

very special trophy in the shape of a silver replica of the ships used by Baffin, Hudson and Davis.

It would take too much space to detail the remainder of the trip. The cities of Manchester, Glasgow, Antwerp, Brussels and others were all hurriedly visited in response to importunate invitations. It was a march of triumph beyond a doubt. And it was convincing proof of what Europe's verdict was in the case of the North Pole. Yet with it all there wasn't the full sweetness of supreme gratification in it for the man who had done so much to deserve it. How could there be when half his own countrymen scorned his great achievement?

The future that had beckoned so: yet, how unsatisfying when it came!

There was no rest in this dashing about. In June Peary returned well tired and feeling surfeited with the notoriety that had been his abroad. He had his summer home at Eagle Island to go to. But even there the pernicious controversy sought him out and made him miserable through many of his days that should have been full of the sunshine and relaxation of a man who had completed his task in life. But there was the Congressional Committee of Investigation to look forward to; the thousand and one petty annoyances of the press; and the undying cancerous horror of the campaign that seemed never to cease in its efforts to besmirch his character and undermine his standing.

But time in a way healed all that. And Congress was finally satisfied in its majority. Came then a

quieter year, until in the spring of 1913 the United States Government further confirmed its prior stand by appointing Peary Special Delegate to the Tenth International Geographical Congress to be held at Rome.

This time the voyage was less pressing both in time and in route. There was a degree of real happiness in the family party too, with Mrs. Peary, Marie and Robert, Jr., along. Stops were made at Madeira and Algiers before reaching Naples on the 28th of March. It was a trip all sunshine: some of that about which Peary had dreamed in the black nights of the past. The faithful friends, Mr. Bridgman and his wife, were at Rome when the party arrived; and other friends of other days. Fate seemed to be relenting at last.

The Mayor who had directed the banquet of three years before was there to welcome Peary who was now his "old comrade." There was much sightseeing, only now of a more agreeable kind since the former excitement was largely over and done with. Some days later the King kindly asked for Peary to come and see him to talk over Captain Cagni's great work as well as the plans of D'Abruzzi for another expedition to the Himalayas. His Highness recalled Peary's great appreciation of what the Italians had done in the polar sphere, in which by birth they were so much more handicapped than men of more northerly races. As this audience took place on the Sixth of April, the fourth anniversary of the Discovery of the Pole, the King made sure to see that appropriate toasts were

drunk and informal but lavish mention made of the terrific years of toil that had preceded the great feat.

Work in connection with the Geographical Congress was not onerous. At last there would be a little relaxation, which so far had been nearly impossible. Things could be done for the pure fun of them, and not for the ultimate significance they might have in regard to some deep-laid scheme for further offense on the Pole. Charming invitations multiplied daily and Peary lost no time in securing a choice of them from his wife whose bliss was surely the equal of his own.

First came a return to Naples where Pompeii and Capri were examined with the best guides in all Italy. After four happy days a leisurely steamer was caught for Cairo. Here the splendor of the east was admixed with the romance of the south. Full moon came in the period there and cast its spell over the blue Egyptian nights: a warm velvet blue so different from the steely cobalt of the Arctic. But the inevitable cropped up and could not be escaped: a lecture before the Royal Khedive Geographical Society, followed next day by a luncheon with Kitchener of Khartoum and his full staff. Here again, as had been the case with Northcliffe, two men faced each other and *understood* each other. Kitchener, notoriously silent, thawed into enthusiastic conversation. The meeting was one of the brightest spots of the journey.

Gay days followed fast and were filled with movement. April 23rd was the day of departure for Mar-

seilles, where on the 29th the community's exclusive Geographical Society entertained the great explorer twice and added its massive gold medal to his mounting collection. The Governor of French Equatorial Africa vied with his scientific friends to make the stay pleasant by becoming personal courier on a jaunt to the Château d'If. On the same evening the Pearys were guests of the Prefect and his hospitable wife at a special performance of Rostand's "Bois Sacreé."

Then came May—May in the south of France, where dreams come true for others besides explorers. And at Nice and Monte Carlo the soft air washed many bitter memories away. . . .

The future that had beckoned was coming true: Jo and Marie, the sweetness of living; the esteem of men. Surely Fate had relented. Yet Peary might have said, as he said before: "Fortunately I did not know that Fate was even then clenching her fist for yet another and more crushing blow."

The final blow that not Fate, perhaps, but God in his inscrutable wisdom was to strike.

May 6, 1913, was Robert Edwin Peary's 57th birthday. Marie, Robert, Jr., and Mrs. Peary conspired to make of it a festal occasion and, from all accounts, succeeded. There were many little private gifts and fancies of appropriate triviality in their gay intent. There was an all-day motor ride up along the thrilling Corniche road that rambles through the hills and flashes into La Turbie like a mad rider pursued. The taste proved too tempting not to go on. So the family

continued up through the Italian Lakes for another ten days into Switzerland, where the white peaks sprayed into the sky and beckoned. Aye, more than beckoned. For in the man they awakened old stirring lusts to do battle with the whispering drift and wind-knives.

"You go on," Peary told the women in his party. "I think I shall enjoy a look at one of them." The peaks he meant. "Perhaps it will do me good," he added with a touch of guilt. He alone knew the subtle poignancy of that ache men have who once have known the ice—that ache to tread it again.

So Robert, Jr., and Sr. took their guides and scaled both Pilatus and Jungfrau. To the secret joy of both a blizzard came and caught them, undoing a bit of the softening effect of sybaritic life. Indeed, after the reunion at Interlaken, it took Mrs. Peary six days to make her husband presentable, so deeply had the sun's rays scalded his features on the high glaciers. When he lectured before the Geneva Geographical Society on the 31st with his blistered and weatherbeaten face he looked much as if he had just come off the Polar Sea.

Again now came the tide of formalities that had proved so overwhelming in 1910. The French outdid themselves this time. Arrival of the Peary party in Paris on the morning of June 6th could well have been compared to the arrival of our ambassador abroad. There were high hats and the old aristocracy (Prince Roland Bonaparte); and news that the Legion of Honor Medal was to be presented after a

lecture at the Sorbonne. Certainly France could have done no more to honor the visitor than in the days of dining and lunching that ensued. Upon conclusion of the visit the American Ambassador made the following report to his home office:

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
PARIS, June 11, 1913.

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington, D.C.

Sir: I have the honor to inform the Department that, learning of the presence in France of Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary, the Société de Géographie de Paris invited him to appear before it on June 9th to deliver a lecture on his discovery of the North Pole.

Admiral Peary's acceptance of this invitation gave rise to the arrangement of a number of receptions in his honor. On his arrival at the station in Paris on the 9th instant he was met by the President and Officers of the Société de Géographie and of other scientific bodies as well as by the President of the Conseil Municipal (Municipal Council) of Paris. In view of the unusual honor thus extended to Admiral Peary in his being met by such personalities I sent the Secretary of the Embassy and the Naval Attaché to represent the Embassy at the station.

On that day Prince Roland Bonaparte, President of the Société de Géographie, gave a lunch in honor of Admiral Peary and on the 8th instant I invited several members of the Government and well known scientific men of France to lunch at the Embassy to meet him.

The meeting of the Société de Géographie de Paris above referred to was held in the Grand Amphitheater of the Sorbonne and was largely attended by the members of this society and by their guests. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was represented by a member of his Department who made a short speech of welcome in the Minister's name.

During his short visit in Paris Admiral Peary was received by the President of the Republic, who conferred upon him the Legion of Honor with the rank of Grand Officier. At the request of Admiral Peary I beg to enclose herewith the insignia of the said Order.

Admiral Peary was also received by the Municipal Council of Paris and congratulated by its President upon the achievements of his Arctic explorations. At this reception the Prefect of the Seine, the Conseil Général of the Seine and the Prefect of Police were represented.

The night before his departure a banquet was given by the Comité France-Amérique at which M. Barthou, President of the Council, presided and who, in the name of the French Government, warmly congratulated Admiral Peary on his successful explorations.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
(Signed) MYRON T. HERRICK.

President Poincairé, French-like, said in his address at the grand banquet: "Peary has achieved not alone for his countrymen, but for his fellow-humans."

No other words could so effectively express Europe's full verdict on the Discovery of the North Pole.

CHAPTER XXV

"THE PROMISED LAND"

NO chronicle of Peary's life could be complete without some account of Eagle Island in Casco Bay where he made his permanent home. Throughout his hard career this bit of sea-girt territory was the center of his dreams. It was the Promised Land that every red-blooded man has in his fancy. Peary actually called it his "Promised Land"; and so it still is known to the Peary family. It was the spot which he always left last during his later expeditions northward; and the one to which he first returned. There it was he saw his babies grow strong and sturdy. There he kept his books, his treasures of the hunt, his precious records, his priceless gifts from the great contemporaries whom he knew. Little by little in his penurious years, years when every extra cent went into the outfitting of the next expedition, he and his wife did little things to further the house and the garden. One cannot say how many dreams he dreamed before the great triangular fireplace that adorns the living room. One could never count the numberless times the man must have turned backward in his memory to other hours lying stormbound in some raging blizzard far north beyond the sun-

shine. There, surrounded by his family in the scenes of his youth he relaxed: there where he knew everything that grew, tree and flower and vine; there even where he heard occasionally mingled with the ceaseless voices of the waves those of the Eskimo dogs he kept on a nearby empty island, descendants of the faithful few which followed him and his flag to the Pole. There we see him, father and husband. We see him just another man planning for his wife and babies that they might have the little luxuries of life and know as little as possible of the pain that brought those luxuries into being.

Nearly every man thinks of and plans for a place of his own some day. Robert Peary began to think such thoughts back in the years when he lived with his mother, Mary Peary. It was when he was in the Portland High School about 1874 that he and some of his youthful comrades in adventure used to go summer camping over on Haskell's Island, a well-known body in the upper reaches of Casco Bay, Maine.

". . . and sometimes I used to sit and look across, he explained three decades later to his children, "towards what seemed to me the most beautiful island in all the world. I didn't tell the other boys, but it seemed like an island my mother used to tell me about in one of her fairy stories she sometimes put me to sleep with."

The beauty of the island gripped the imagination of the youth. Surely few islands in the world were

so symmetrical; few so densely wooded, yet so richly so; and few with their loveliness graced by a setting of bold uprearing cliffs that lent rugged character to charm. The picture cast a spell on the boy which he could not shake off. He rowed over and visited the island by himself. He clambered over the smiling beach of creamy sand and gravel. He scaled the frowning cliffs. He flung himself breathless upon a bit of heather-scented greensward atop the heights—the same bit that still blooms in the springtime beneath what later became the grown man's study window. Presently he strolled into the woods. He found them less dense within than they had appeared at a distance. Overhead the canopy of their leafy boughs made the air beneath refreshingly cool; and this air was scented with the fragrance of a score of indigenous wild-flowers. As he walked inland the ground rose slowly until its altitude was close to a hundred feet above the level of the sea. Near the center of the island he surrendered to temptation. There was a gnarled spruce with knots and elbows. He climbed it. High up he peered through the thinning branches about him. On every hand spread the blue waters of Casco Bay. To the westward beyond the tide-rips lay the timbered mainland. Eastward out by Halfway Rock was the open sea. No man could have resisted it. Here was a kingdom waiting for its monarch: an estate ripe for possession by an understanding master.

The Island itself is seventeen acres at high water; several more at low. There are pebble beaches for

the mild, and rocky crags for the daring. Pacing up and down on the outer rim one may see on summer evenings the sun set magnificently behind Mount Washington to the west, while in the east the full moon climbs steadily out of the sea. At the same moment between them both and deep in the up-coast sky may be flickering the changeful glow of the northern lights, "spirits of those departed" as the Eskimos call them. Seven lighthouses can be counted from the bold upper end. A main ship channel passes directly in front of the present house site.

Except for its northern and southern extremities and its rocky perimeter the Island is densely wooded, spruce and maples predominating. Wild raspberry and current bushes cram some exposed corners; while in the cool depths of the little forest are mossy banks rich with ferns. Wild flowers bloom in profusion down the trails that wind to and fro, especially wild roses.

"It is going to be mine!" said young Robert Peary to himself as he slid to the rich earth underfoot again. And, even then, when Robert Peary said he was going to do a thing he did it. The very same month he borrowed from his mother five hundred dollars, a vast sum to the boy as well as to the mother, and he bought Eagle Island.

Years sped by, Peary went to college and became an engineer, a naval officer; an explorer. Interests and occupations, contacts and obligations crowded so upon one another that one wonders how Peary managed to keep up with half of them. But he did

not forget Eagle Island. Indeed, with the years his confidence in the future of Casco Bay as a watering place increased. He bought more islands: Basket and Whaleboat and Pound of Tea, and others. But none by his estimate could touch Eagle Island as a place of residence.

Besides time he lacked capital, save a few thousands he could muster on his lecture tours, all of which was plunged back into the Arctic quest. So it was not until 1904 that any active work was done towards a lodge on the Island. The four terrific years in Ellesmere Land had brought a desperate resolve not to postpone longer the dream of a Promised Land.

Early in that spring Peary and his wife with the two children set forth in high spirits for what was to be the adventure of their lives. But it is to be doubted if other than the father fully visualized the reality to follow. The expedition based on the little Hotel on Harpswell, famous for its cod and cats—huge white angoras and thick chested maltese that would tackle anything from a bulldog down. Peary had already designed the bungalow that was later to be the center of the big house. Artizans were recruited from Portland, but the main help was taken from the rank and file of the hardy Harpswell fishermen.

The sub-commander in charge of the landing party was the now notorious Charlie Percy. Percy was another of the little band of henchmen whom Peary grouped about him in the course of his life, and who remained faithful to the end. Back in the early Ice-

Cap days Percy had turned up in St. John's, Newfoundland, thoroughly down on his luck. The explorer discerned worth where others had failed to find it, and took the wastrel on. Thenceforward Percy was steward on the North Pole voyages, and his bread still bids for fame where northern travelers gather to spin yarns of other days.

Percy and his family arrived on Eagle Island with a scow-load of lumber while the snow still streaked the highlands. He was a man of courage. He brought his wife and sister-in-law, a kit of tools and a small wall tent. There was no pier. The dory's keel that brought these pioneers grated over the gravel just at dusk. Above the tideline the scow crew dumped the lumber and left. Fumbling in lantern light, the women put up the tent while Charlie explored about a bit. Directly he returned with evil news. He had found a tombstone. The women clung to each other in fear. A night with the dead was not one to be enjoyed by a superstitious Newfoundland fishing family. All sat up late and discussed the unhappy situation in low tones. But Nature must be served. Drowsiness overtook the three. They slid into their blankets. Whereupon a new horror presented itself: the women had chosen a thriving ant-hill for their camp-site! After an interminable night the carpenters arrived from the mainland.

"Tombstone?" repeated Peary next day, in surprise at Charlie's doleful announcement.

SHACKLETON. PEARY. AMUNDSEN.

"Yes, sir," reiterated the other and led the way to a white board sign at the far end of the beach well above high water.

"You can't read, I suppose," mused Peary.

"No," admitted Percy a little sheepishly and with a quick glance of suspicion.

"Well, you needn't be excited, Charlie," smiled Peary. "Your tombstone just says 'No trespassing.'"

Trivial in itself, the incident; but revealing. For it was Peary's unjeering patience, his forbearance and his regard for the sensibilities of others that won him year after year the enduring loyalty of fishermen, seafarers and Eskimos, all of whom contributed incalculably to the success of his plans.

The main bungalow was finished by the end of June. In addition there was constructed a comfortable two-room lodging for the caretakers, the Percy family. Mrs. Percy had been north with Mrs. Peary and Marie the winter they spent at Sabine on the *Windward* in 1900–01. So she felt as fully a family retainer as did Charlie. And when the great day came for shifting from the mainland to the Island she did her share of preparing for the festive housewarming that followed on July 4, 1904.

This was the beginning of a new life for Peary. The tormenting Inspiration of the North wrung from him so much of his heart's strength that without the comforting relaxation of Eagle Island atmosphere he must have broken under the strain. Now he had some palpable comfort to sustain him in the darker days. He had laid a foundation for some-

thing more beautiful than fame, something in many ways sweeter than success: Jo's dream and his come true.

Jo's dream did we say? Yet when the house stood finished and Peary proudly escorted the mother of the Snow Baby to its portals she paused a moment on the threshold and delivered a woman's ultimatum: "It's beautiful, Bert, and an ideal place for the children. But I want it understood right here and now that *never* will I stay here without you!"

Alas, for the ruthlessness of life that so overrides our dearest wishes. More than half her days at Eagle Island were spent with him away.

Complications began at once, and have continued ever since. Not the tormenting complications of Peary's main achievement. But the endearing intricacies of domesticity when that domesticity is reared on the principles of an independent monarchy. Let us say more accurately, perhaps, an oligarchy. For it was not the explorer that ruled the Island Kingdom; nor his fetching Consort. Nor, as in some spoiled families, was it the children. Rather was it the King and Queen, Robert and Marie, Charlie and his bride, dear old Bridgman, and a score of others, many of world-wide fame that came and went with the years and left their bundle of counsel about how and what to build, where to build it, and when.

Blessed is the man who can turn his back as Peary did upon heart-rending pertinacity of the outer world and fetch a scowl for the importunate dispute raging at his hearth-stone about *where the cooking should be*

done. He who had swayed large audiences with his eloquence now fell back defeated when he struggled to uphold the sacredness of the main bungalow and save it from the profane smells of frying food. There was the Percy Lodge, designed to be a communal kitchen and dining room. Why jettison a plan so sound just because it was sometimes a wet walk down the hill. But the King lost. Whereupon it fell to his lot to assist the "Old Man," as Charlie was affectionately known, in adding a two-room ell to the main house before the first summer had spent its sunshine.

Here again was a respite superbly profitable besides its material gain. For in the manual labor that never seemed to end was hidden a host of "Daily Dozens," that fibered muscles soon to be needed on the polar pack, as well as numbing doubts and fears that might have done much to spoil the nights of refreshing slumber.

The house was constructed as far as possible from the flesh and bone of the Island itself. Drift timbers from the beach went into the beams and sills. Framing for the veranda and other portions of the visible structure was fashioned from the aromatic evergreens, spruce and fir; and from the white birch, oak and moosewood maples that abounded in the acres beyond the backyard.

One of the most striking and original items in the house was its fireplace. Peary designed it with the same lucid reasoning that he put into his northern ships and shacks. The whole thing was simply a massive triangular chimney with arched openings at

the level of the living room floor. Above each opening was erected a wide mantle of stone to match the face of which it was a part. Three kinds of stone were used: white wave-rounded cobbles from the tide line; glistening quartz from a "private" vein that slashed one corner of the island; and a ferrous schist still faintly threaded from the glacial pressure that once over-rode New England. Thus there were three separate and distinct fireplaces to throw their cheery warmth across the broad room when crisp nights came.

It was not until after the final polar trip had gone down into history and Europe had been dealt with as became its kindness that Peary's full plans for the Island matured. The weathered dining-room and kitchen that he and the Old Man had toiled over that first joyous summer while the remainder of their families looked on had long since been outgrown. This cubicle was therefore lowered to a ledge over the side of the eastern cliff. Today it is known as the "*Igloo*," and holds the overflow of guests from the main house, or becomes more humbly the playroom for Marie's two young explorers. An air of affluence came with the addition of a large new dining-room, bedrooms and baths, glassed-in porches, promenade deck that encircled the whole, and so on.

Yet even this was only the beginning for Peary. His long-repressed artistic sense that had so often craved expression now found its medium in outlying items of the house and Island. Prudence was primarily behind the plan to create some convenient,

accessible and, at the same time, wholly fire-proof place in which to store perishable articles. But the execution of the plan was largely a play of Peary's sense of the beautiful and appropriate.

As one approaches the Island from northward the house seems to emerge from the gently curving line of heavy woods behind. The front of the structure stands clear. It is like a pilot house on a huge ship. The bluff end of the Island directly ahead of the front door has a flat forecastle-like top and makes a very life-like prow. On either side of this prow just below the outer corners of the veranda are two turret-like bastions whose tops are on a level with the "fore-castle." Their walls extend downward some fifteen feet. At any distance these curious masses blend into the dark cliffs of which they seem to form an integral part. This is because Peary built them of the same rock, huge granite slabs cut from the mother magna. These turrets give the whole place a touch of unique personality that somehow expressed the spiritual essence of their creator: the grim and almost brooding expression of his features; yet, withal, his pervasive capacity for being all the best that one asks of a man.

The "bomb proofs," as Peary jocularly called them, were the owner's pets. The one to the east was to be equipped as a museum. In it were placed such trophies as skins, tusks, skulls, horns, and mounted specimens. There were scores of fascinating items that had made Arctic history in the years past: an alcohol stove that had seen the Pole; a harpoon

of Ootah; a rifle that had saved six men from starvation; and so on. These were all very personal trophies. The National Museum at Washington had Peary's collection of medals. Bowdoin and the American Museum had North Pole Sledges. Most of the other big important things had been generously distributed here and there all over the country. But there were many items of little intrinsic value that Peary treasured in his eastern bastion. It was one of the touches of great happiness in his last years to plan this "Cave of Memories."

The west bastion was even more personal. One has to enter it to catch the true light of Peary's inner artistry. This was his sacred retreat. It was circular in shape, and of very substantial diameter. Tall windows evenly spaced were put at close intervals through three quarters of its circumference. Between these windows were placed bookcases containing Peary's marvellous Arctic library. Situated at a point from which the windows afforded a superb view of the bay and distant mainland was a large desk. Before the desk stood a massive globe with its apex ever visible to the still-bright blue eyes of the one white man who had ever stood upon it.

It was at this desk in the fire-proof, sound-proof, study that great plans were formed: the earth always being treated as but a spheroid tamed and servile to the will of man; treated as the Conqueror of its last won Geographical Secret might be expected to treat it. Great men in many lines came to the Island and sat in that study to confer with the

refreshing Mind behind the desk. Many plans were hatched there that now are credited to other men; or are too big to be credited to man at all. One such plan is our national air defenses which were largely visualized there before they actually existed.

To stand in that study today before the empty desk and chair, with the blood-red rays of the afternoon sun flooding in, to stand there silently for a moment and contemplate this execution of a single beautiful idea, is to commune for that moment with him that has gone.

But the working out of Peary's whim was no selfish indifference towards the others. He saw that half of the whole ground floor of the house was given over to a spacious living room looking out over three directions of Bay and Sea. He sunk toil and money in splendid masonry to preserve the cliffs and the lovely lines of the landmass supporting the main structure. He saw to the starting of flower gardens, to the building of winding steps cunningly identified with the natural rocks so that they, too, seemed a part of Nature's designing. He had built a gigantic tank beneath the house, fillable from a sparkling spring so that fresh water was always available in abundance. He devised retaining walls near the beach so that the high tide filled an artificial basin and receding left a sun-warmed pool for bathers. He divided the upper story when it came into comfortable bed chambers. Oh, no, it wasn't a "great man's house" in any sense, but his home which he filled with happiness and the laughter of young people.

It was typical of this side of the man that he established the unique "spoon holders" as he termed them. These devices were the result of a heavy gale that swooped down one June evening some years ago. All the boats on the beach, some five in number and including two valuable whaleboats, were lifted bodily by the wind and dropped again on the rocks about a hundred yards away. Needless to say, their careers as boats were ended. But Peary's Arctic resourcefulness combined with his watchful interest in the contentment of those about him suggested that of the wreckage might be made something useful. So he had the bows and sterns of the boats, such as remained intact, sawed off, upended, and a seat put in. One now finds these picturesque relics here and there about the Island, propped up with a slight back-tilt as cosy seats and wind-breaks.

In this connection a question naturally arises as to the loneliness and isolation of such a place. At once it can be declared with assurance that no place was lonely for Peary where he could have with him his wife and children. When the children's friends, and later Marie's children, were added to extend the circle the joy of it all was proportionately heightened for him who had planned just this for many years. As for actual isolation, a man once offered to lay a telephone line from the mainland:

"What would it cost?" asked Peary bluffly.
"Oh, about five thousand."
To which came the prompt retort: "I'd pay ten

thousand any day to keep us free of telephones forever!"

Despite its distance and the difficulty of its access the Island has seen some thrilling times. In the fall of 1909 after the discovery of the Pole, reporters were swarming over the place; messages from the Labrador were being rushed in; and a dozen other kinds of excitement kept everyone at a fever pitch. Then when the *Roosevelt* came along she stopped there to discharge such of Peary's effects as he did not wish to drag on to New York. The whole expedition came ashore and fell joyfully upon groaning tables of home cooking and fresh vegetables again. After the newspaper men followed the feature writers for magazines and books. Mr. William Rau of Philadelphia came up with a staff of photographers to develop and print up the priceless polar pictures. Experts accompanied him to retouch negatives; others to put up the colored slides. From such scenes it was a far cry to loneliness.

As the years went on there was less of a rush, but the stream of visitors has never greatly dwindled. Distinguished scientists and explorers, notables and friends from all over the world, have drifted in from time to time. There was always the charm and sense of privilege that went with a visit which proved a magnet even beyond the great pleasure of meeting one of the world's great men of his time.

Eagle Island was Peary's first and last real home in all his wandering life, half Navy—half Arctic. So

it came about that to it gravitated the essence of him and his belongings. Today in the mute possessions gathered there one finds an epitome of the man's full years: boyhood collections of eggs, bird nests, and geological specimens from the days of Mary Peary in Brunswick; the hawks he had shot and mounted in college and in Fryeburg; coral and other trophies from Key West; treasures from Nicaragua; narwhal horns and walrus tusks; toy kayaks and soapstone carvings of the Eskimos. Not so important to the unseeing eye; but, how wonderful the story that lies behind them all!

CHAPTER XXVI

WAR TAKES ITS TOLL

"THERE is a new art in the world today, the art of flying. A new world to conquer, the world of the atmosphere. A new ocean to navigate and utilize, the ocean of the air, whose only coasts are infinite space."

In these words Peary defined the final and perhaps the most interesting chapter of his life that opened in 1913. He had finished with the Arctic, with Congress and with Europe. He had concluded his activities in connection with the Tenth International Geographic Conference which he had attended in Rome in 1913. Though he had returned home tired and overwhelmed with obligations, he turned at once with the fresh vigor of a man in his prime to the new science that gripped his attention now even as the Pole had thirty years before.

Without realizing it at the time he had already made his contact with aviation. In 1912 he had telegraphed Orville Wright on the occasion of the death of his brother Wilbur: "The world has lost one of its great figures." He thought of Wilbur as more than inventor and scientist. He termed him "a conqueror and explorer." He declared then and there

that posterity would place the name of Wright above that of Christopher Columbus.

It is not easy in short space to depict Peary's profound enthusiasm over aviation. One must remember his unusual perspective as well as the habit he had formed of plunging to the heart of an enterprise and judging promptly of its merit. No man more swiftly recognized the tremendous future of aviation. No man since Peary has given more of himself to aviation. Few men have anticipated so accurately the lines of development which aviation would follow.

Peary is thought of as the Discoverer of the Pole. That was the one thing he did which no other man was able to do. Yet an analysis of his achievements in connection with aviation leads one to doubt whether they were not in many ways greater and of more intrinsic value than anything he did in the Arctic. Even the hardship and trials he endured to help aviation are comparable to those he suffered in the north.

It is interesting to see how Peary with his past experience in unraveling tangled threads saw almost immediately the ways in which he could best help aviation along. To the technicists he left mechanical development. The military in this country and abroad were pushing forward with great speed in types of bodies and of engines. Commercial competition was already in sight. Political opportunists were feeling their way about. But no one of stature was taking a disinterested and dispassionate view of

the application of aviation to national welfare. In contrast Peary scarcely knew what it was to work for profit. He despised politics with a healthy contempt. In military affairs his strategy was based on his clear-cut campaign plans of the North, which differed only slightly from those familiar to militarists. Hence he was the ideal individual for a go-between for aviation and America.

He saw at once that leadership was needed. And he was not a man to hang theory on a hook where practical enterprise would be more appropriate. So he selected what he considered an item of paramount interest and value and concentrated on that.

This item was that of national air-ways. To his mind there could be no wide application of aircraft until the routes they were to travel had been mapped out. Outwardly this then was his theory: to establish at the earliest possible date a complete network of air-ways throughout the United States and to establish a system of landing places that would facilitate the commercial use of aircraft. In his own mind he expanded this idea to include the entire world. He recognized that only a small fraction of the globe had been charted. With his explorer's passion for the unknown he pictured filling in the vast blank spaces yet untrod by man within the few years to follow.

In the summer of 1913 he conferred with Messrs. A. W. Wood and Henry Woodhouse on the practical execution of his ideas. The whole project was then drawn up in documentary form and submitted to the

Aero Club of America. This club at once appointed Peary chairman of the committee of aeronautic maps and landing places, which chairmanship he continued until his death. In the course of time this committee initiated and promoted the idea of the commercial application of aircraft. Immense prejudice of the public against aviation, the juggernaut that had killed so many, was largely broken down by the untiring efforts of this small group of public-spirited men under Peary's leadership.

When in the summer of 1914 European war was declared, Peary's aeronautic horizon widened rapidly. He was among the first to see the likelihood of this country being drawn into the struggle. Although he had once hoped and prayed his relations with Congress were forever at an end he now saw that his patriotic duty led him along a road back to Washington. His first idea was to use his committee of the Aero Club as a nucleus for a conference of the geographers of the world in this country to promote an air-ways league. But with Europe at war and national defense of prime interest, this scholarly and more passive idea was laid aside. Being a man of action Peary therefore quickly shouldered off everything that did not directly contribute to national aggrandizement in aeronautic defense. Deep was his conviction that American pilots might all too soon have to fly in combat.

Peary himself began to fly. On his first journey in the air, taken in one of the old-fashioned dangerous rattletraps above Long Island Sound, the engine

stalled. This came near being the end of the explorer. But danger was an old companion. He escaped with a few bruises and the next day flew again. Many times after that he flew without hesitation. He seemed to feel that by his personal example he could lend character to the rapidly growing safety of flying.

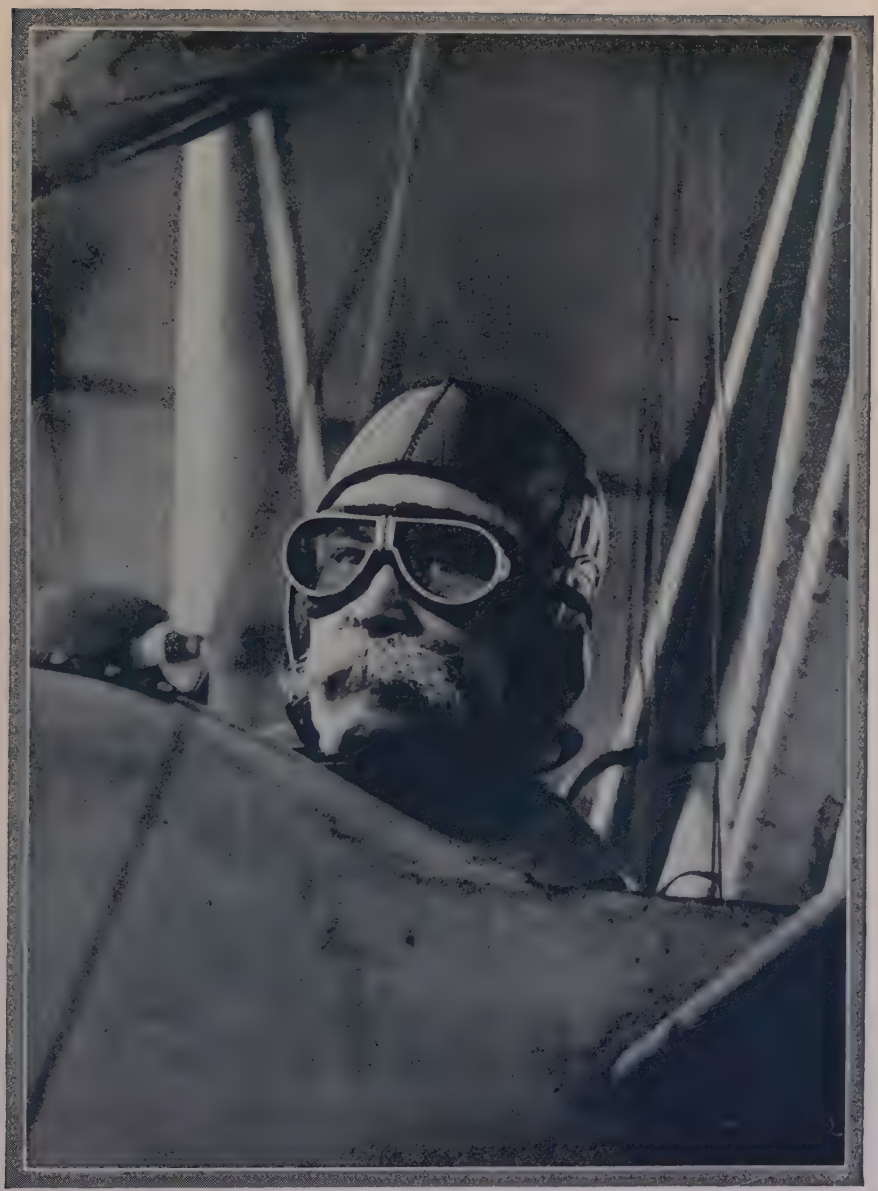
Early in 1915 he got in touch with John Hays Hammond, Jr. Hammond was a radio expert and knew a good deal about flying. Peary had begun to apply himself to the idea of an air coast patrol for the protection of our Atlantic seaboard wherein radio and planes would combine through a chain of small stations to guard the entire coastline against an advance enemy. Hammond listened and became enthusiastic. Radio had reached a point where the scheme was thoroughly feasible. With this encouragement Peary organized the National Aerial Coast Patrol commission with headquarters in Washington. Owing to the restricted size of our air forces this Commission was looked upon as somewhat visionary when it started. At the time there were less than 20 aviators in the army and navy and but a little over two dozen airplanes. The Navy had one air station at Pensacola, Florida; and the Army one at San Diego, California.

Neither the War nor the Navy Department felt in a position to promote or even recognize the project. Too much weight was being given aeronautics, they claimed; and such a course would militate against the success of other lines.

As Peary was used to cold water in Washington

he well knew what to do. He hunted up a friend of advanced ideas and position. This friend happened to be Mr. Henry P. Davison. Mr. Davison was soon won over. Before he was through he not only had given Peary moral support in a variety of ways, but had with a group of friends contributed over $250,000 towards aerial defense of America. Incidentally, the Coast Patrol Unit composed entirely of young Yale students whom Mr. Davison's generosity provided for, gave the Navy its only large trained group of pilots in 1917 on the declaration of war.

The minute that the Commission began operations Peary found himself involved in an enormous bulk of administrative work. He was old enough and had done enough to sit back and enjoy himself. But that was not his idea of happiness. He wanted to be in the thick of the fray. When he found his new activity taking root his energies redoubled in its support. So effective were the feelers he sent out in every direction that by the beginning of 1916 the Commission had behind it a large percentage of the most influential men available in America. Several senators and representatives, Assistant Secretaries of the Treasury and of War, and business notables from all over the country were among its members. It was unavoidable that the Commission should soon become involved in politics. The rapidly growing industry of aircraft manufacture created business interests that were bound to conflict. These interests importuned Peary to help them both among themselves and with Congress. But he refused to be drawn aside. He held



Peary as an Aviator.

to his central idea of an effective coast defense for our air forces.

As a result he actually produced the first complete and specific plan for military defense of the Atlantic Coast. The essential details of this plan were as follows:

Establish a continuous line of seaplanes or flying boats fifty miles or more off shore and 200 feet or more in the air around our entire coasts from Eastport, Me., to Brownsville, Texas; and from San Diego, Calif., to Cape Flattery, Wash., each machine traveling back and forth over its section or beat.

Divide our entire coast lines into sections of convenient length, say about 100 miles. Each of these sections and stations will be equipped with a seaplane. Each of these machines will carry a driver and an observer and be equipped with light wireless apparatus, powerful glasses and a sensitive microphone. When in active operation these seaplanes in each section will take their position some fifty miles off-shore, and patrol their respective beats continuously back and forth in clear weather 2,000 feet or more above the sea, from which altitudes ships fifty miles distant may be seen. At night or in the fog the seaplanes would, of course, sweep much lower, at all times themselves invisible to the enemy.

By means of wireless, information as to the character, number and apparent destination of approaching ships will be transmitted to the shore station; and from these to Washington whence, if the ships are hostile, orders will issue directing movements of our

fleet and the submarine squadrons for the preparation of the coast defenses and for the concentration of troops, if necessary, while reserve planes hurrying out will keep the approaching craft under continuous inspection.

The specific duties of such a patrol would be to hunt and destroy submarines; locate submerged mines; search coast for submarine bases; convoy troop and merchant ships; attack hostile ships on discovery; communicate with incoming ships about hidden mines, fields and other menaces.

The comprehensiveness and practicability of this plan instantly refutes any doubt as to Peary's professional ability, a point so often criticized by his enemies who claimed his arctic work disqualified him for other duties.

Even more astonishing evidence of Peary's almost uncanny grasp of the new science of aeronautics and of its significance appears in his speech before the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in Philadelphia on April 29, 1916. He said in part:

We do not respect a man unless he possesses some elements of force of character.

And no nation can win respect or exert influence unless it stands for forcefulness and strength.

In no way can we, as a nation, stand so effectively for forcefulness, for strength, and for world influence, as by Command of the Air.

Our geographical position, our size, our resources, our wealth, our astonishing national growth, the

watchfulness of Providence which has accompanied more than one of our national crises, all indicate that our rôle in the world's future, that our part in world influence, is to be of the first importance. Just as in the war with Spain, events external to us and beyond our control forced us from our position of isolation into that of a world power with possessions and interests circling the globe, so today events external to us, and entirely beyond our control, are shaping for us a position and an influence greater than ever before.

To touch upon only one of the directions in which that world influence will act, I will note our position as the most influential member of that American Federation which is surely coming, a federation of peaceful, prosperous, autonomous states, impregnable in their union, occupying the entire western hemisphere, seated upon two continents, reaching from pole to pole. In that coming world influence, the one great dominant thing which will overshadow all else will be air superiority and power.

Twenty-four hundred years ago Themistocles, Athenian statesman, soldier, and creator of Athenian naval policy, asserted the principle that "He who commands the sea commands all." With the naval victory of Salamis, which changed the history of the world, he drove home the truth of his principle, and sent it down the centuries to be a living axiom of national power and influence today.

"He who commands the sea commands all" still holds good. But it has a rival, the command of the air, without which it is beginning to be valueless, and in the near future it will be superseded entirely by the axiom "He who commands the air commands all."

However, we cannot yet minimize the importance of command of the seas. The battle cruiser offers

us the quickest and surest means of securing that command, but that is another story. What we must do now is to insure command of the air, or we shall be hopelessly outclassed. Great and important as is a sufficient navy for our safety, I speak advisedly when I say that our air service of the near future will be more vital to our safety than our navy and our army combined.

The United States Army was the first army to have an aeroplane in 1909. Our navy was the first navy to have a seaplane in 1911.

Yet where are we now? We have, army and navy together, less than 100 aeroplanes, and could hardly muster 50 aviators. Little Bulgaria with an area somewhat greater than Maine, and a population less than Massachusetts, has over 300 aeroplanes.

The personnel of the French air service today numbers more officers and men than there are in our entire army. The personnel of the British air service numbers more officers and men than we have in our entire navy. Germany has not less than 9,000 aeroplanes, and all these countries are constantly adding with feverish haste to their equipment in this department.

The Ministries of these nations which have thousands of aeroplanes, and whose frontiers are insignificant compared with ours, are constantly apologizing to the people of their countries for not being able to increase their air fleets fast enough to defend their country and protect the lives of their people.

The sooner we wake up to the fact that command of the air is absolutely vital to our safety, and that it can be secured more quickly and at less cost than any other form of defense, the better it will be for us.

The aeroplane has completely changed modern warfare. Surprise attacks are no longer possible.

And if one of the contestants can secure command of the air and deprive the other of it, conditions immediately become those of a fight between a blind man and one in possession of his eyesight. In the present struggle abroad the air strength of the contestants on the Western front is so nearly equal, that the balance wavers from side to side, first one and then the other having the advantage.

In our case, our geographical position gives us a natural advantage which if we utilize *now* should relieve us of anxiety.

An attack upon us must come by sea. Our coast line as a base gives us an inestimable advantage in aerial warfare, and will enable us to send out such a veritable cloud of aeroplanes as would completely overwhelm and destroy any number of aeroplanes that could be transported on the decks of a hostile fleet, thus leaving us in the possession of our eyes and the enemy blinded.

But we must be ready *before* the fact. There will be no time to get ready when the attack comes. Once an enemy secures a base on our shores, any and every city in the country may be the prey of his air squadrons. And a single squadron of aeroplanes sweeping across New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Washington, in a frightful shower of falling bombs would cause more damage in an hour than our entire air service would cost.

We should have at the very minimum not less than 2,000 seaplanes ready for duty on the Atlantic Coast, and an equal number on the Pacific, 5,000 on each coast would be much better.

At each important place squadrons of aeroplanes should be parked like tents of the summer encampment of the National Guard.

Do not think I am talking wildly. In 1900 there

were some 700 automobiles in this country. Today there are some 3,000,000 and it has been estimated that the output for this year will be over 1,000,000. The growth of the aeroplane will be equally or more rapid than that of the automobile.

This plan created such an impression among military leaders both of the Army and Navy that Peary was called before the Senate Sub-Committee on Military Affairs in June, 1916. This committee indicated a certain fearfulness about the success Peary had been having in his activities in connection with aviation. The interesting part about the whole inquiry, which was very lengthy, lay in the fact that its trend was soon away from actual coastal defense and into the realms of the future value of air power itself. Said Peary:

I am a very strong believer that we are coming to air power just the same as in the past we came to sea power; and that the exigency (the war) over on the other side has centered the first attention and energy of the world on the military phase of aviation. I believe that as soon as the war is over we shall take up the commercial phase of it; the carrying of passengers, freight, and the air-control of our coasts and patrol of our frontiers.

It is interesting that Senator Kirby asked Peary with some show of spleen: "Do you anticipate that air navigation will be beneficial in any way except as a fighting unit, an adjunct as a fighting agency for the Army and Navy?" To which came a very emphatic affirmative.

The best minds at that time were willing to admit that the airplane was having a real military use. Daily aviators were scouting and combating over the lines of their enemy. But the percentage of casualties was still high enough to scare off less penetrative minds than Peary's.

At this time Peary was active with the promoters of the Lincoln Highway in connection with his airways project that he had not abandoned. He saw the great value of a transcontinental highway in connection with aviation. It would in many respects provide a thread of support for aviators flying over it. Assistance could go to those in trouble with dispatch; and landing places could be strung along the main route at frequent intervals. But here again he encountered both political and commercial complications through his becoming involved with private interests whose ulterior motives were nearly always selfish.

Then war came. Exploration was set aside with other items of peace. All men were dragged into the great holocaust. Patriotic men like Peary, whatever their inward shrinking from the terrible strife, were glad to contribute their bit to lighten the load along the line. Peary had reached his 61st year. He had lived a clean life, but one that had crushed much of his reserve energy away. Moreover his triumph and success had been tainted by the misfortune that had met him at the moment when he should have been beyond the evil fate that assailed him. But he did not hesitate. His country needed

him. And when it was proposed that his name and organizing ability should be linked with aviation he did not dissent. As he was chairman of the National Committee on Coast Defense by Air he had the arduous duties that went with wide publicity as well as many other entangling interests. He felt with many other big men the miserable avidity of those who used the war to further their own personal fortunes. He was assailed on every hand by fanatics and covetous fools. He had to travel and speak. He was meticulous in paying his own expenses though easy junketing was always open to him. He had to write and read a multitude of reports. He contributed such efforts generously, although he might well have cleaned up a tidy sum by making a commercial proposition of his literary talents. He had all over again to subject his weary mind and body to the gruelling drag of routine. Once he said: "I am very tired." He was. And he never again got quite rested.

Early in 1917 it became apparent that a campaign of education was necessary to win full national support of aviation. This support was a critical matter in the minds of those who saw how soon and how inevitably we must enter the war. Peary's splendid work so far made him the most appropriate person to lead the campaign. He was offered and he accepted the presidency of the Aero League of America. This was to be a civilian organization of which the central idea was an America supreme in aeronautics. Some measure of the work Peary did

and of the success of this League may be gleaned from the fact that within 12 months the organization grew from a mere handful to over 5,000 members.

Naturally with such momentum, and with the growing interest in Congress, the prestige of the Aero Club and of the Commission which Peary headed took on a considerable importance in the minds of the administration. After war had been declared Secretary Baker requested the Aero Club to select two fliers to represent it in government activities. Peary and Henry Woodhouse were selected. Thus, curious to relate, Peary by a round-about way had re-entered the service of his country in a line which but a few years before did not exist.

His life now became more crowded than ever. Even the tumultuous years following the discovery of the Pole seemed tame beside the insistent and increasing demands of war. To the exigencies of war was added the rapid acceleration that has been characteristic of aeronautics throughout. As a result Peary's contacts were doubled and redoubled. His obligations increased in number at every turn. His responsibilities piled up in geometrical ratio. He was answerable to the government and to the people. He was a buffer between Congress and commercial interests. He was a missionary and an ambassador at one and the same time.

It was here, as much as through arctic hardship, that he laid the foundation of his mortal illness. For when he felt the central efforts of his vast aeronautical organization were faltering he abandoned his

desk and his eastern engagements of an agreeable semi-social sort, and went into the field himself. Possibly some of the zest of the old days came back. He did not permit himself to be sent. He picked his route and went at his own expense. He went where he felt he was most needed. He went far west, up to Seattle and down along the Pacific coast. He swung back into the middle west, lecturing and debating, even entreating those whose indifference he sought to turn to warm enthusiasm.

He was back east but two hours before he was hard at work drafting lectures and articles on the promotion of air power in America. He accepted every invitation to lecture or to write of which he was humanly capable. He spared himself neither time nor toil.

Meanwhile the organization of the Coast Patrol Units had gone on apace. The first one had been fathered by Mr. Davison before the War. Units Numbers 2, 3, and 4 followed in 1917 as fast as money and personnel could be gathered. The Peary plan was followed through in each case.

Termination of the War did not put an end to his exhausting labors in connection with American areonautics. He continued active in interesting big men in what he felt was the greatest single development of modern science. By this time the Aerial League had among its officers Senator Robert K. Evans, Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, Augustus Post, John Hays Hammond, Jr., Newton D. Baker, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas A. Edison, General John J. Pershing,

Theodore Roosevelt, and others of equal standing. It was to Peary's efforts that such members may largely be credited.

Under date of May 15, 1918, one of Peary's dreams came true. He wrote to the members of the Aero League of America:

> The aerial mail route inaugurated today between New York, Philadelphia and Washington which carries this message to you is the forerunner of a network of aerial mail lines which will cover the entire world within a few years, and which will be a dominant factor in the reconstruction that will follow the war.

Peary may be called the father of the idea of a United Air Service. He wrote:

> A Secretary of Aeronautics is a vital and immediate necessity here. He must be a big executive, he must have imagination, he must have the confidence of the public and of the press. The place measures fully up to the stature of an ex-president. It will demand all the abilities of the builder of the Panama Canal. But the man who accepts it must be willing to sacrifice himself. He will either make good or he will not; and this country may at very short notice reach such a boiling state of mind that there will be no half-way station between success and failure for those in responsible positions.

It was another year before ill-health became a deterrent factor. The Pan-American Aeronautic Convention was held in Atlantic City in May, 1919. On the 14th, after a heartbreaking effort to "make

the grade," Peary finally gave up any idea of attending. A consultation of his physicians resulted in the conclusion that it would be better if he did not leave Washington on account of his failing physical condition.

To the end he clung to the single theme that the basic ideals of this country born of our ancestry, our national growth and our physical position, are bigness and realization. He pointed out that these two ideals are our ever present though sometimes unconscious trend in every line of effort. Here in aviation was an opportunity for us to make good on these ideals on a great scale, by taking up in earnest the air service of this nation, recognizing that it was of crucial importance, and putting it and ourselves in the very world van.

Said he at the conclusion of one moving appeal:

"Our geographical position, our national rank and standing, our national safety demand it. Our resources and mechanical genius make it easily possible. I would that I might have the power to transmit to this audience the intensity of my feeling on the subject. It is vital, vital, VITAL, to us, this Command of the Air!"

Even with all this we cannot picture him as being a man of a single great interest. At least three large exploring projects were under way and demanded his attention. MacMillan had gone into the north in 1913 to find Crocker Land. Bartlett wanted to go into the antarctic. There was still a third expedition in view for flying across both Poles. Amundsen had

special ideas for exciting Peary's interest. Stefansson had invoked his aid for another Alaskan expedition. Then there were constant opportunities for writing. These were very tempting. The Arctic books of past years had been turned out at such speed and under such pressure that Peary yearned to sit back and create a story of the North such as he felt he was capable of under proper conditions. Flying visits to Eagle Island gave him hours there in which to begin drafting his notes for a book or two along this line. But he never went further.

CHAPTER XXVII

A FATHER TO HIS SON

WHEN a man has become famous in the short span allotted him here in this life one at once wonders what was the secret formula of his success and what he will leave to posterity to justify the plaudits of his contemporaries.

Peary was the first man to reach the North Pole. That was a distinguished feat not only because of the difficulties he surmounted in person, but because he was successful where countless others had failed. Despite this we know that many of those of us alive today will no doubt see men fly over the same pole. Perhaps some of us out of pure sport will also take the trip by air. But we shall not see the darkness of the long night. Nor shall we ever know the dragging toil of sea-ice sledging. Moreover it is unlikely that the North Pole itself shall ever become intrinsically a commercial proposition. Beside such conclusions the aspect of Peary's feat seems to shrink.

What then did the man leave for all the trouble and time and effort he put into his life's commission? How did he justify the spiritual strength and material attainments that by God's will became his heritage

at birth? We have already spoken of the relation of his work to human progress. As Roosevelt said, in this sense, "Peary has made all dwellers in the civilized world his debtors." But that is an abstract quantity. And there are many who will not understand the nature of such a contribution. So it is well to seek another.

We soon find it. For as the life of Robert Peary unfolds from the days with his mother in Maine through the hard years north and then the bitter aftermath we see one great outstanding feature of it all: the superb and unsullied strength of heart with which he forged ahead. It is this dominant character trait of unswerving and unbreakable spirit that is the great thing Peary left behind him as a lesson and inspiration which his life must always be to those who come after: to other men—young men in particular. It is such singleness of purpose as his that is so largely needed today to assure success in any line of endeavor. It is such dignity and gentleness as was Peary's that are most often lacking in the juggernaut of modern civilization. It was his virtuous adherence to the truth; his moral courage at all times, his forbearance, his generosity, his domesticity, that stood out to mark him a great man little matter what his other failings. For he was no saint; no paragon of virtue; not a man without strong enemies. The leaven of human frailty that lies in every man lay in him. But the qualities that were his he possessed in such number and of such standard that he stood head and shoulders above the average of his

time; not so much because he discovered the North Pole, as because he was a great American.

Indeed, his lesser traits were mostly what made him possible as a pattern. Had he been precocious in his youth another youth might well at once dispose of any idea of emulation. Hence the value, in the light of what came after, lying in Peary's full normality as a school-day athlete and student. He was good, yes; but not because he was bigger and more clever, but because he fought to beat the others out.

In the same sense it is good to find that he did not die a rich man. He died a poor man. The myth of a huge government pension supposed by many to have been accorded him has long been exploded. His retired pay as a rear admiral was but a paltry few hundreds a month that ceased with his death, with no allowance or special privileges of an economic sort. He had sunk all his earlier earnings into his expeditions. The tragedy of the controversy robbed him of what he might have won through lectures and writing. His four books were only the mildest sort of commercial successes; one was an absolute failure. As the lecture company that contracted to handle him after the last trip proved practically non-existent this financial humiliation was added to his other poignant difficulties. His estate consisted largely of the various small islands he owned in Casco Bay; which, while they are undoubtedly of considerable potential value, produce no income. No, there lay no taint of greed in Peary's polar search.

So often a public man is looked upon as one gifted

in the use of tongue and pen whereby he can promote his fortunes to huge advantage as compared with the mediocre individual. Not so Peary. For he despised writing in the sense of literary endeavor. His ringing lines anent his work were born of the boundless enthusiasm and energy he threw into all he did. The spell he learned to cast by spoken eloquence was little more than a process of communicating his boundless inner enthusiasm to his listeners. Yet it was more in that when he spoke he had none to fear. He had no enemies in the sense of human pawns about him who must be propitiated. As lecturer or toastmaster he never had to carry the politician's cross of dread lest he offend some useful proponent in the crowd. This led in time to Peary's reputation as a man too often indifferent to the feelings of others. Yet when such conclusion is tracked down the evidence consists largely of hypersensitive individuals abashed by having their pet weaknesses exposed. Pro-polar speeches were not good proof to use that Peary's eloquence was above the average or that he was other than a ruthless promoter of his schemes. Polar eloquence entailed too much that was over the head of the average man; too much theory and high endeavor. But when Peary came to further the fortunes of aviation quite a new criterion of his merits as a speaker were evolved. He was as direct as ever; as inspired; as resonant in his delivery; and as lucid in the machinery of his syntax. But there was more. He struck home on points of world-wide material interest. He hammered out conclusions that other

minds have taken a decade to grasp. He recognized no peer save among the ranks of pure technicists. Whether the commercial or military aspects of aviation were before the house he was at home in debating them, and could fare well in verbal joust with the best of professional orators. Indeed, before the Senate he alone of those that testified in 1916 created a uniform impression of being above suspicion of commercial taint.

But, as has been shown, it was not his eloquence that counted mostly in his work supporting aviation; it was the vision with which he foresaw the future. By his northern work his mind had been trained to stand back and view in considerable perspective what lay ahead among the various obstacles that loomed so large when close by. For years and years he had been facing handicaps and hazards at first sight insuperable. As a result he could not be stampeded in any ordinary set of circumstances simply because they appeared off-hand to be beyond the power of man to overcome. Aviation casualty lists were significant items; but, to Peary, not determinants of finality. Said he: "It is not the men we lose, but why we lose them, that counts." Which gave people who disliked his bluntness a chance to harp again upon his cruelty and the disagreeableness of his personality. Yet Peary was only doing with aviation what he had been doing with the North: accepting the fate of others who had died in the cause, analyzing why they had met their fate, and applying his deductions to man's ultimate tri-

umph in that rigorous sphere of exploration. He knew many would be killed before the goal of air conquest was reached. He knew that the gain was worth the loss. He appreciated the epithets of foolhardy and vainglorious that were applied to those who like himself drove forward despite the most desperate set-backs. But he did not falter. And when his critics accused him of encouraging young men to join the fanatics in this new air madness his answer was himself to go and fly.

He was not riding on a wave of momentary enthusiasm. For, as he told his listeners all over the country:

> This work of air preparedness is not just for the present emergency with Germany. That is only a present incident which should spur us to more immediate readiness. This work of air preparedness is for preparedness on our part for that great realignment of powerful, conflicting, and impoverished interests which is surely coming at the end of this war, and which is a far greater contingency for us than a possible war with Germany under present conditions. This matter is for preparedness even beyond that—preparedness also for that commercial air power which is coming in the future, and in which we should lead.

Naturally Peary did not relinquish interest in exploration left to be done after the discovery of the Pole. He keenly felt the undying nature of youth's desire for adventure. Aviation and war and the swift intricacies of modern life did much to satisfy

a young man's passion for romantic foraging through the strange places of the world. But, as Peary pointed out, there need be no abandonment of exploration just because the two poles had been discovered. He took the lead in planning an American assault upon the South Pole with Bob Bartlett at its head, until the success of Scott and Amundsen put an end to such plans. Then there was the vast basin of the Polar Sea north of Alaska yet to be cleared up. Peary anticipated the use of planes in this work, just as he did in the great mission of charting the whole remaining portion of the earth from the air. He was one of the few men that have ever lived who could visualize how small a fraction of the earth's surface is yet exploited by the human race.

Yet no man could have done and thought so much and left so little in the way of human documents to show his inner self. Truly he was the "Iron Man" of his age and generation. Even his most intimate letters were almost wholly unrevealing. Take an exceptionally long one to his old and close friend Herbert Bridgman:

SOUTH HARPSWELL, ME.,
Sept. 22, 1910.

My Dear Bridgman: Yours of the 21st is just at hand. The hair-breadth escape of the Bridgmans from Eagle Island had more extended effects than you knew. Owing, doubtless, to the surcharging of the atmosphere, one of the two dogs which we saw on Haddock Rock in the forenoon got gay about the

time you were on the bosom of the briny deep and swam from Haddock Rock to Flag Island.

In regard to the provisional draft, we talked of $125 for the seamen and firemen[1] instead of $200, which change I think will bring the total within the suggested limits. I enclose revised and corrected copy of your provisional schedule. Very sincerely,

Peary.

Most often, though, he wrote with crisp brevity such as:

EAGLE ISLAND,
Sept. 29, 1910.

My Dear Bridgman: Inclosed revised bonus list is O.K. Let her go. Will write on other matters to reach you Monday. Sincerely, Peary."

To the very end Peary was a remarkable type of leader. He was not the born leader, in the sense of being automatically able to inspire his men by that hypnotic charm some men have, the weaker more often than the strong character. There was always too much iron in his will to soften its outer surfaces into a blurred and fuzzy humaneness, so reassuring to the doubtful or suspicious. There was less and less of plasticity in his manner of contact as time went on. Indeed, even those who knew him best often likened him to a great rock in the desert worn clean by the elements: a stern, high entity in human form. All of this Peary knew. And he did not blind himself to the handicap it had to prove. He was an

[1] Bonus for those on the North Pole trip.

egoist, yes. But he was egotistic only when throwing the bulk of his own weight into the balance could achieve something of general good. He knew the thought behind the scowl; the resentment buried in silence; the treachery of a taut-lipped smile. And he knew only too well what a boon it would have been to toss aside his natural shell of austerity and blend his own deep-buried anxieties with those about him. But he was incapable of so doing. Had he been capable he must have failed in what he had striven for. To this day men deny this fact. They hold that Peary could have been more spiritually fluid and still won out. But they did not know Peary. They are debating from the same sort of premise that hypothecates fabrication of life on the chemist's ability to stir up in his mortar the recipe for flesh and bone and blood prior analyses have given. Yet stir as he will the chemist still has but a sodden mass so long as he cannot infuse his recipe with soul. We cannot say where matter ends and the soul begins. For the same reason we cannot shear away Peary's bluntness and still have Peary. He knew what he was like; and he knew men knew. Yet he was a leader despite all. This, possibly, was his greatest accomplishment.

It is equally absurd to spring to the conclusion that he was inhuman because he was brusque and blunt. One had only to catch the sparkle in his eye, or trade brisk viewpoints with him to warm to his superfine sense of inconsequentialities. No man that was not human could have dealt successfully with

the Eskimos unless he stooped to unmentionable severity. In a score of ways Peary's hold on these aborigines has been attacked. But in every instance the true facts reached all coincided. Had the natives disliked him they could have left. He had no means to pursue them up and down six hundred miles of storm-swept coast. He could wield no threat that bore weight, save the threat of their losing his friendship. This friendship did not mean life or death. They live without it today, and did in the ages before Peary. He could only cajole them with his tongue and invite them with his small rewards. And the tongue and gifts were futile, as had been proved in the case of Kane and all the others, unless there was also something finer in the way of trust and loyalty. Peary won both; and both in his memory among the northern tribe still survive.

In the cases of his white associates it seems at first sight more difficult to arrive at a conclusion on account of the mass of maledictions that were hurled in his direction from time to time by those who had been north with him. But when one comes to analyze the matter and takes the mature judgment of those who went north with him *repeatedly* an entirely new light is thrown on the subject. Borup told often of putting freezing feet under Peary's shirt against his bare body on the Polar Sea. Boatswain Murphy never got over Peary's insistence that his rival be assisted in any way possible. Captain Sam Bartlett said in the Hotel Astor at the luncheon of the Civic Forum: "I was always afraid to ask anything of

Peary because I knew he would never hesitate to deprive himself in order to give to others." Bob Bartlett, supposed to have been "wronged" when he was not permitted to accompany his Leader to the Pole, wrote later:

When I see men in high positions worrying over troubles I just say "thank heaven, I had the luck to serve with Peary!" With him sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof. His evenness of temper and calmness of demeanor never stopped surprising me. This was the big secret of his success with the Eskimos. In trouble, in sorrow, in gladness, he was always the same. When we landed up in Labrador and Peary was all ready to send his message back about his great discovery he sent his first one to Mrs. Peary. He had his one about the Pole all ready. But he did not send it. He just turned around to me and said: "Bob, where is your telegram to your mother?"

If unthinking Nature robbed him of some degree of amenity in human intercourse she certainly did well by him in her fashioning of his physical appearance. At sixty he was tall and straight as a West Pointer. He still walked with that long swinging stride which had carried him so many thousands of miles across the snow fields. He held himself unusually erect for a man of his age. This with his finely modeled head, bold, well-shaped features, and the flowing reddish gray moustache he always wore, his expressive dignity, all combined to make him a man to stand out in any gathering. So striking was

his appearance that it was said of his testimony before many a war committee "the words carried double weight by virtue of the looks of the man who uttered them." Yet withal, there was an enveloping simplicity about him that no amount of distinction of appearance could hide.

It was this man then in the full prime of his health and strength, of his fame and capacity for achievement, that suddenly in the midst of life faced death. He had seen the fellow many times before. He did not fear him. Indeed, he knew his vagaries better than most men. But this time there was an easy assurance in his manner that betokened more than just plain risk. Moreover, physicians seemed inclined to aid and abet the Reaper's grim desires.

Specifically Robert Peary was threatened with pernicious anæmia, one of the few malignant ills our science cannot cure.

To Mrs. Peary he said: "Jo, we have won many fights. We are going to win this one." The old spirit was not daunted.

The fight was a long one. It lasted close on to two years. Rest and diet were prescribed. But there had been a terrific strain on the mechanism before medicine took charge. First, the North's hammerings for half a lifetime; then the dragging punishment of wartime activity on which was superimposed trip after trip back and forth across the country until physical exhaustion intervened.

But the battered body had yet a trace of its old elasticity. Months came when strength increased

and it looked as if the future that had beckoned so, the really Peaceful Future, would still be contentfully fulfilled. So far, since 1909, the years had been far too violently crowded for the perfect consummation of that dream of earthly peace. With the returning strength came fresh hope, new plans for Eagle Island, and an almost youthful exuberance that the era of unbroken bliss was about to begin. It was, only not as Robert Peary had planned.

One more weary struggle he had ahead before he could rest. The scourge returned. Blood transfusions helped. But their relief was brief, and became briefer as the months passed. Ultimately it was only weeks. And finally days. Then the anæmia held full sway at last.

But Robert Peary, though his body failed, his spirit never faltered. He did not discuss the situation. He inquired occasionally of his physicians their estimate. If their reply indicated a gloomy prognosis he made no sign of any inner disturbance. He accepted their dictum as he had learned to accept other hard things in life, without quailing or resentment.

He did not discuss the impending catastrophe with his wife. If anything he was more loving, were that possible; perhaps he leaned a bit more upon her courageous reassurance of ultimate recovery, which she gave despite the darkening doubts in her heart.

The day came when he preferred to ride always rather than walk, a heartbreaking day to one with Peary's love for physical exercise. But he still said

nothing. With merciful swiftness the disease progressed. Shut-in days came. But he could still walk up and down and there was the whole family to be happy with. He did not speak of his weakness; nor did they—to him. Not even with his wife was there talk of this creeping horror that each day squeezed a little more strength from his numb and aching body.

Then he went to bed for good. The last transfusion of forty-six had not helped. The physicians, the best in Washington and Baltimore, agreed it was the end. They answered Peary's query in the affirmative. A man has the right to know.

The father sent for his son. The task was very simple. Only our shrinking dread of the unknown robs such a situation of its beauty. For three hours young Robert sat alone by the bedside. Peary gave him explicit instructions about the future. There were many little details; a full life entails many obligations at its close. For Peary the scene was not very new. Many times before it had been enacted when he left his base to go out into the unknown. Only now he was going out for the last time, and there would be no return. He had therefore to be a little more careful and specific.

That there should be no touch of melodrama, which he despised, he had earlier in the day dispatched Mrs. Peary on a very special errand. She returned. The patient seemed, if anything, a little brighter. "Was there then hope after all?" flashed the quick thought through her mind. Young Robert

she surprised sitting in the room with his head resting on his arms on the table. The father answered her anxious question: "The boy is just tired, Jo." He was.

There was still a day or two left. They were not wholly grievous days. Peary could talk as he lay quietly waiting for the end. He did not dismiss the family. But he seemed to cling just a bit more to his wife and daughter in the precious minutes drifting by.

Then it came: not ugly, not too abrupt; just a dimming vision, a flickering of the candle-flame; a sentence or two and a half-smile, and it was over.

The task was finished: oh, so beautifully finished!

THE END

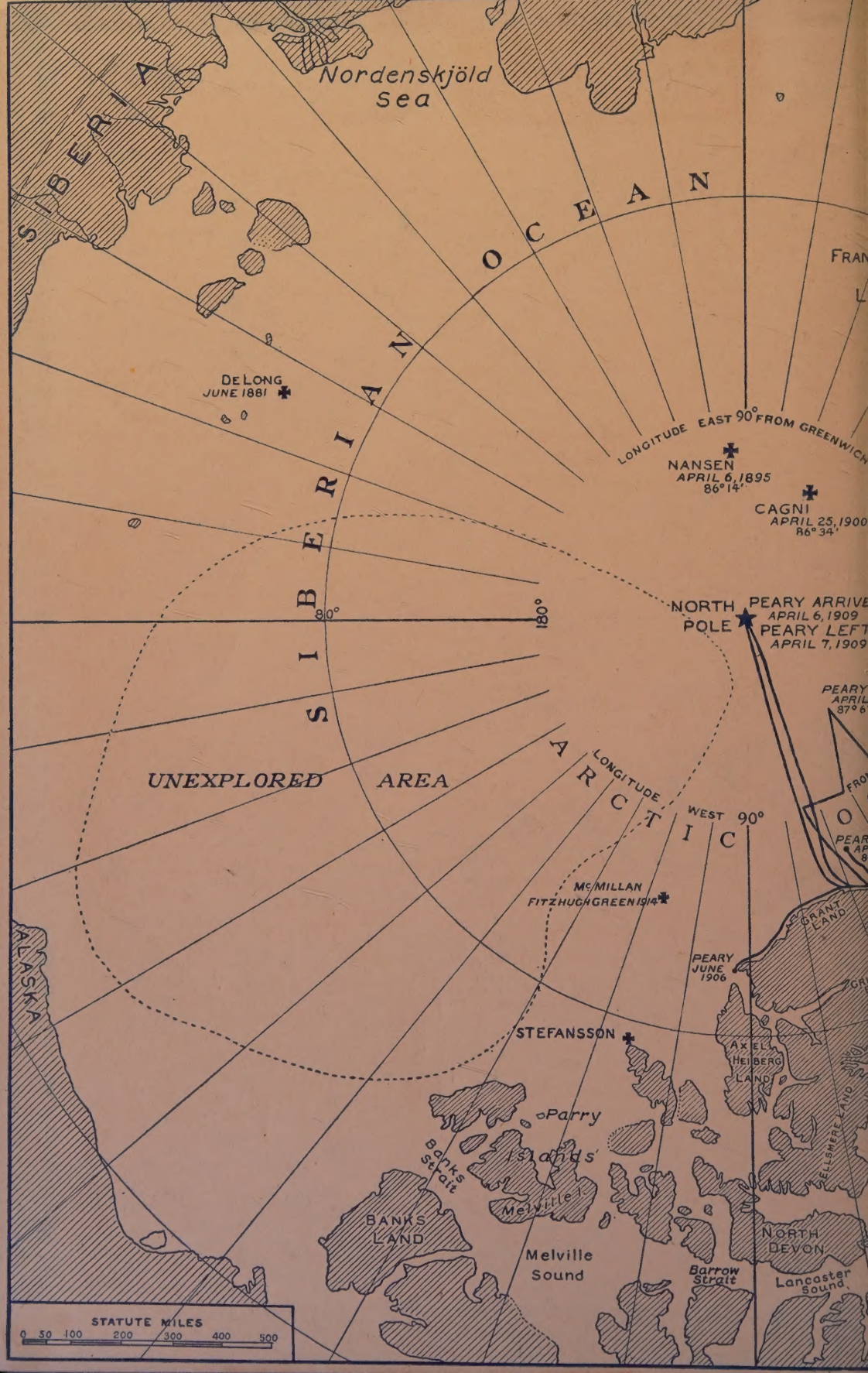
Ideas worked. The underlying purpose or driving power of the explorer. Interpretation - "The Why"

The unique Polar experience, the psychological changes in the mind -

Support bounding of last chapter - Deliberate facing of problem -

Bringing out the calibre of the man in the aviation chapters. Making one see his power by gauging it in things we are more familiar with

The difficulties - mastery of subject - the vitalizing by rigorous interpretation not too dominant yet running like a bass theme


SIBERIA
Nordenskjöld Sea
ARCTIC OCEAN
SIBERIAN
DE LONG JUNE 1881
LONGITUDE EAST 90° FROM GREENWICH
NANSEN APRIL 6, 1895 86° 14'
CAGNI APRIL 25, 1900 86° 34'
80°
180°
NORTH POLE
PEARY ARRIVED APRIL 6, 1909
PEARY LEFT APRIL 7, 1909
UNEXPLORED AREA
LONGITUDE WEST 90°
McMILLAN FITZHUGH GREEN 1914
PEARY JUNE 1906
GRANT LAND
STEFANSSON
AXEL HEIBERG LAND
ELLESMERE LAND
ALASKA
Parry Islands
Banks Strait
Melville I.
BANKS LAND
Melville Sound
NORTH DEVON
Barrow Strait
Lancaster Sound
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White Sea

RUSSIA

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Gulf of Bothnia

BARENTS SEA

SWEDEN

NORWAY

Spitzbergen

PARRY
JULY 23, 1827

80°

70°

ARCTIC CIRCLE

GREENLAND SEA

PEARY
AY 22, 1900

PEARY LAND

PEARY 1893-95

PEARY 1892

ICELAND

GREENLAND

PEARY IN "ROOSEVELT" 1905-6 & 1908-9

PEARY 1886

DISKO

GODHAVN

FIN

BAY

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